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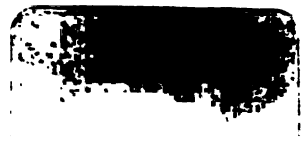

THE GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED TURKEY COMPANY RECEIVING THE FIRST TURKISH AMBASSADOR AND SUITE.
(FROM A CONTEMPORARY PAINTING BY M BROWN)
ON THE LEFT SIDE ARE GEORGE III, LORD SALISBURY, MR PITT, LORD GRANVILLE ETC
& ON THE RIGHT THE TURKISH AMBASSADOR, MAVROUDI EFFENDI, DERVISHE EFFENDI, THE SECRETARY & INTERPRETER

THE SULTAN AND HIS SUBJECTS

BY

RICHARD DAVEY

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

With Frontispiece

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL, LD.

1897

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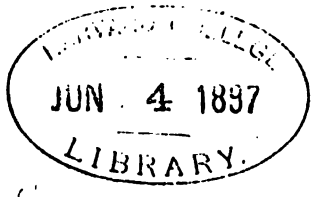

Darwin Fund
1897

F. M. EVANS AND CO., LIMITED, PRINTERS,
CRYSTAL PALACE, S.E.

TO

LYMAN HASKELL ELLINGWOOD, ESQ.,

OF NEW YORK,

This Book is Dedicated

IN MEMORY OF A LIFE-LONG FRIENDSHIP.

London, 1897.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

THE following chapters embody the results of an earnest attempt to set forth the chief characteristics of those heterogeneous nationalities which have, in process of time and by virtue of conquest, fallen under the dominion of the Sultans. The work deals with the Turkish people generally, but chiefly with the Turks of Constantinople.

The Author has studied his subject with a serious desire to bring before the intelligent reading public of this country such facts, and such anecdotes (elucidating and explaining facts), as may enable an impartial reader to form a fair conclusion as to the present condition, and the probable destiny, of that great Oriental Empire, on whose action and fate so much of the peace and welfare of Western Europe depends. To attain such a purpose, a knowledge of the life and manners of the Turks, and of the Eastern

Christians, and of their religious and political views, is indispensable. And the writer of this book offers as an excuse for these two bulky volumes, that his researches on the spot, as well as in every attainable work of authority on a subject so wide, so deep, and so important, could not, with justice, be compressed into a smaller space. On the other hand, each chapter of this book could easily be developed into a thick volume by itself, and yet not exhaust its subject.

The orthography of Eastern words is a difficult and delicate subject. It has been treated, in these pages, in a way that, it is hoped, will make easy reading for the unlearned, and not offend the Oriental scholar. In most cases the phonetic equivalent of Arabic and Turkish words has been given, to the best of the Author's ability. But for certain well-known terms, such as the name of the Prophet, the old-fashioned orthography of Mahomet, instead of the more recent Mohammed, has been retained, as being the most familiar, and therefore the most convenient, to the ordinary reader. It may, perhaps, be added, that the spelling of Oriental words is an unsettled and contentious matter, and it will frequently be noticed that the same name is written differently by German, French, Spanish, Italian, and English authorities, each trustworthy enough as to

his information, but each rendering the word as it strikes his own ear.

In conclusion, cordial thanks are offered to those who, by their advice and experience, have contributed to the composition of this book, especially to the friends in Constantinople and in England who have kindly assisted the Author in the collection of facts, and through whose good offices he has been able to see and hear much that must, otherwise, have escaped his observation.

RICHARD DAVEY.

NOTE.

Several of these papers have appeared, but in a much simpler form, in *The Fortnightly Review*, *The Theatre*, *The Art Journal*, and *National Observer*, and they are reproduced with the kind permission of the editors.

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Many of my readers may possibly be surprised to see frequent allusions made to the Archives of the Bank of St. George, in Genoa. This, possibly the oldest banking establishment in Europe, dates from 1346, and was created mainly for facilitating the financial and commercial transactions with the Levant. The Archives date from the foundation, and contain hundreds of thousands of letters, accounts, and other documents of the supremest importance to the historian. Almost the entire correspondence between the Republic and the Podestas of Galata will be found here. Within the past few years these precious MSS. have been properly sorted and arranged for the use of scholars in a building set apart for the purpose. The old banking house itself, handsomely restored, serves as a municipal museum.

THE SULTAN AND HIS SUBJECTS

ERRATA TO VOL. I.

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THE

SULTAN AND HIS SUBJECTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SULTAN'S COURT AND HAREEM.

THE succession to the Ottoman Khaliphate differs from that of any other sovereignty, Eastern or Western. Mahomet, minute as he was in framing his code of moral and hygienic law, makes no mention, in the Koran, of any defined plan for securing the succession to his pontifical office. This singular oversight on the part of the Prophet has been the cause of at least two-thirds of the troubles which have befallen the Turkish Empire, especially during the last five centuries, and it is, indeed, the mother of all the evils which go to make up that complex bundle of misfortune, error, and crime, we habitually describe as the Eastern Question. Probably the reason for this omission on the part of a Lawgiver otherwise so exact in detail, as definitely to determine the very number of times the Faithful must wash their faces, hands, and feet each day, is due to the circumstance that, in spite of his having fifteen wives, he left no male heir to carry on his dynasty. The confusion which ensued

on Mahomet's death, and which was entirely owing to his leaving no direct heir, ended in the election of Abu-Bakr-as-Siddig,* his father-in-law, to the vacant throne. He was in due time followed by Omār, who bore no relationship to either of his predecessors, and owed his election solely to his exceptional qualifications. By the time he died, Islāmism had become so great a power, that the necessity of definitely determining the succession to the Khaliphate began to agitate the Moslim world. Ali, the husband of Mahomet's only daughter, Fâtimāh, a turbulent and ambitious man, now came forward to assert his claims, and those of his sons, the grandchildren of the founder of the Faith, who, he averred, ought to inherit the honours of their grandsire. The immediate followers of Mahomet, however, were not of this opinion. They preferred merit to descent.

It is needless to enter into the details of the murders of Omār and Othmān, Ali's sons, or of the subsequent defeat, and violent death, of Ali himself, who, according to the early chronicler's picturesque expression, "fell a victim of the sword." On his death Múā'wiyah was proclaimed supreme ruler over all the countries which had been won by Mohammedan valour. He was the last of the elected Khaliphs, and it must be confessed that the elective system had not hitherto proved pre-eminently conducive to peace and prosperity, seeing it had led to no less than three

* Father of Ayishah, whom Mahomet married when she was only nine years of age. Some think the name means, *father of the maiden*. Siddig also signifies veracious.

assassinations, and to continuous civil war. Although Múā'wiyah was in no way connected with the Prophet's family, he resolved, if possible, to establish an hereditary dynasty, and he partially succeeded, for some member or other of his blood contrived to hold the reins of power for close upon a century. Unfortunately for them, they had to govern a people whose every act, in political and private life, is regulated by the Koran, which, as I have already pointed out, makes no mention whatever of the matter of the Prophet's succession. On the death of Múā'wiyah II., Marwân, an usurper, only remotely connected with the reigning family, succeeded. After his decease the crown passed irregularly, from brother to nephew (never from father to son), and the last of the Ommiades, as that dynasty was called, was only third cousin to his immediate predecessor. He perished in a general massacre of the Khalïphah family, in which the women of the Hareem were included.

The next dynasty, the Abassides, was founded by El-Saffa, lineally descended from an uncle of the Prophet; a somewhat vague connexion, which, however, enabled him to obtain a following, and seat himself firmly on the throne. His grandson was the famous Harun-al-Rashid, the glories of whose reign it were superfluous to recall. On his deathbed, unhappily, this great prince divided his colossal Empire between his three sons, who straightway fell to quarrelling, each desiring to secure the entire inheritance. Their dissensions led to the conquest of the Empire by the Turkish Seljūks, under whom the supreme power

passed, from uncle to nephew, and nephew to cousin, in a perfect tempest of murder, massacre, and civil war, ending in the utter exhaustion of their power. It is under this dynasty—which lasted, roughly speaking, for about a hundred years, from the end of the tenth century—that we first find symptoms of the custom, now grown into a legal obligation, of choosing the eldest male survivor of the Sultan's blood, as his successor. And with it came those merciless and systematic domestic tragedies, which had their mainspring in the imperative desire to remove all who might stand in the way of the reigning sovereign's own offspring. The chief glory of the Seljūks was Meelek-Shah (1072–1092), who extended the Empire from the Caspian to the Mediterranean Sea, even to the shores of the Bosphorus, and bestowed royal encouragement on Art and Letters. At his death, family and internecine dissension broke out afresh, and, in less than twenty years, his vast possessions were split into a dozen minor sovereignties, with their capitals (to name a few) at Aleppo, Iconium, Nicea, Aïden, Angora, Brusa, and Damascus.

Each of these petty Sultans claimed the full honours of the Khaliphate, and learned indeed must be the historian, who shall conclusively prove which aspirant was descended, even in the remotest degree, from the most distant of the Prophet's family connexions.

Out of the ruins of the Seljūk domination rose the Othmānli or Turkish Empire. Othmān, its founder, was the son of Erthogrul, a splendid specimen of the nomad chief. Erthogrul never dreamt of arrogating

to himself the proud descent so willingly accepted by his son's successors, but served loyally under Suleymān-Shah, chief of the Oguses Turks, who, with his horde of fifty thousand men, swept the Armenian plateau, right up to the sources of the River Euphrates, and made his faithful lieutenant Governor of the district of Bosoeni, in Asia Minor. His seat of government was Sultan Beni, "Brow of Sultan," a name which it retains to this day, as being the cradle of the actual Turkish dynasty.

As is so usual, in the case of the founders of illustrious houses, various quaint and semi-miraculous legends are woven round the youth and early manhood of Othmān.

Not the least charming is a tale of his courtship of the fair Māl'Khatun, daughter of the learned Sheikh Edebali, and of their subsequent marriage. Their son, Orkhān, put the coping-stone upon his father Othmān's life-work, by annihilating all the minor Sultanates, and, having finally consolidated his Empire, he chose Brusa, on the Bithynian Olympus, for his capital.

From Orkhān down to Mohammed II., "the Conqueror," hardly one of the Sultans died a natural death.

Having converted Constantinople into Stambul, the sacred capital of Islām—second only to Mecca in the eyes of the Faithful—the victorious Mohammed turned his thoughts to the all-important subject of the Imperial succession. He had narrowly escaped assassination, on the death of his father, Murād II., and was deeply versed in all the mysterious intrigues of Oriental Courts. He tarnished the glory of his

reign, to European eyes, by the publication of a barbarous edict, which made it lawful for a new Sultan to murder all his male relations, in order to secure the throne to his own offspring. Selim II., in 1566, issued yet another firman, prohibiting members of the Imperial family from participating, even in the remotest degree, in public business, and condemning them to rigorous seclusion during the life of the reigning sovereign. The folly of such a regulation, whereby the heir to the crown is kept in utter ignorance of all those subjects wherein a prince, likely to be called to govern a great country, should be deeply learned, needs no comment.

Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid II., for instance (who reigns in the year of Grace, 1896), has four living brothers, and not one only, as is usually stated, who are all of them virtually prisoners of State. These Princes are the deposed and insane Sultan Murād V., His Majesty's senior by some four years; Rechad Effendi, the heir-apparent; and two other much younger brothers—Wār-ed-din Effendi and Suleymān Effendi. Selim, the Sultan's own eldest son, stands no chance of succeeding to the throne, until all his uncles, and the three sons of his eldest uncle, Murād V., are dead. Should Rechad succeed, the crown does not pass, on his death, to his own children, but to his next brother. If Wār-ed-din Effendi dies, Suleymān will succeed, and if he has shuffled off this mortal coil, the sceptre then falls to the eldest son of Murād V., and so on, from brother to brother, in that branch of the family, until there are no more of them

left; then, and then only, will Selim and his brothers have a chance.

In former times, matters used to be considerably simplified, on the accession of each Sultan, by a general massacre of all the males who stood in the way of his direct issue. When you visit the Turbhés, or tombs, of the Imperial family, which surround the seven Imperial Mosques, you may observe that the turbans affixed to certain of the coffins—some of them those of mere infants—are slightly inclined to the left. This means, it seems, that the body beneath is that of a Prince who has died a violent death.

The following description of Rechad Effendi (the actual heir-apparent) was given me by M. N.: "He is about fifty-two years of age, tall and well-proportioned, but inclined to stoop. His features are regular; his nose, like that of Abd-ul-Hamid, rather Semitic in shape; his eyes are blue, his hair and beard light red.* His manners are very gracious and easy, and he is exceedingly generous and kind. He is probably not as intelligent as his brother Abd-ul-Hamid, but he is nothing like so nervous, although obliged to live the sequestered life enforced by the absurd regulations and traditions of the Ottoman Court, and he is fairly well informed as to what is taking place in Europe, and in the Empire. Though far from fanatical, he is sincerely religious. He has two wives, both highly educated ladies, who speak French, German, and

* In accordance with Court etiquette the Sultan must dye his hair and beard a vivid black, and should never be seen with gray hairs. Time itself must stand still, or seem to do so, to oblige the Pādishāh.

English. They are well-born, being the daughters of distinguished Pashas, and have been educated by foreign governesses. They dress, within doors, like Frenchwomen. His Highness has several children, of whom three are boys. Rechad plays the piano exceedingly well, and is a great admirer of classical music. Like Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz, he is a good draughtsman. I have seen some of these drawings, and they really have considerable merit, much above the average of amateur performances." I may mention that Ahmed Pasha (Shekir, or *Sugar Pasha*, as he is called, on account of his very agreeable manners) showed me, when I was in Constantinople, a very curious collection of sketches, mostly caricatures, of quite exceptional cleverness, by Abd-ul-Aziz.

The brothers of Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid are addressed as "Effendi," or gentlemen; but, as a kind of concession to the "Almanac de Gôtha," and to modern ideas, they are invariably, by European diplomatists, and in the Levantine papers, styled "Imperial Highnesses." Rechad is said to be a capital farmer, taking a practical interest in his estate up the Bosphorus, to which he pays daily visits, his only relaxation in a life of stupendous monotony. When he drives out, it is invariably in a brougham, escorted and surrounded by at least a dozen armed horsemen. All visitors, even his medical man, are searched on entering the Tcheragan Palace—where he resides in a kind of State captivity—for books and papers, which are taken from them, and only returned when they leave the building. Thus,

an intelligent and well-intentioned Prince is kept, so far as possible, in ignorance of those very things with which he ought to be best acquainted, in order to qualify himself to occupy the throne, should he be destined to ascend its slippery steps. Verily, the Eastern Question is a hydra, and this matter of the succession is by no means the least monstrously ugly of its many heads. It has caused so much bloodshed, and bred such incredible Palace and Hareem intrigues, as to baffle the imagination, and exceed the invention, of the most ingenious of sensational novelists.

Let us examine how this royal education, so-called, is carried out. The baby Prince's infant years are spent in the Hareem, with his mother and nurses. This, of course, is as it should be; but those who are familiar with Hareem life declare that the mother lives in constant terror, lest her child should be done away with, in some mysterious manner, by one of her many rivals, especially if the babe has the remotest chance of ever succeeding to the throne.

Suppose, for the sake of argument, that it grows up. When it reaches its tenth year, it is handed over to a *Lala* (male attendant), whose duty it is to watch over it, day and night. Presently, to this functionary is added a Mollah, or priest, who teaches the rudiments of education, and, above all, those of religion and of the Koran. By the time the boy is twelve or thirteen, French and Italian professors from Pera are brought to the Palace, who teach him a smattering of several European languages. But no consecutive system of education is carried out, and the child is soon sur-

rounded by parasites and flatterers, whose sole object is to obtain complete control over him, so that, in the event of his succeeding to the throne, they may be all-powerful through his means.

All the books which are used for the education of a Turkish Prince are carefully examined by the Censor. I have seen some French educational books, which had belonged to Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz, in which the number of erasures proved how mangled was the text he was allowed to study. In the history of Turkey, for instance, no mention of the Siege of Constantinople by the Crusaders is permitted to appear, nor, indeed, is reference to a defeat of the Turks, in any part of the world, to be found in Turkish school books. The name of Christ, and the word Christian, are also invariably erased, and in a brief history of France, the entire chapter dealing with the French Revolution has been bodily torn out.

If the young Prince should not be the immediate heir, he is allowed a little more liberty. Thus, when Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz brought his two nephews, afterwards Sultans Murād, and Abd-ul-Hamid, to Europe, Hamid was permitted to go about Paris and London with an attendant, whereas Murād was not allowed to leave the Palace for an instant.

Abd-ul-Hamid, as a young man, was fairly well known in Perote society. There were certain European houses which he frequented, a grace denied his brother Rechad, who never sets foot in any house but his own.

However, things are better now than they were a century ago. Then, an hereditary Prince usually

spent his minority in the *Kafes*, or cage, in the Seraglio, to which, even now you are not allowed to approach nearer than a certain number of yards, though probably the only prisoners it at present contains are rats and mice.

The *Kafes* is a series of fair-sized one-storied buildings, with windows on the upper floor only. They are said to contain twelve large chambers each, which were formerly sumptuously furnished, in Oriental style. Each of these pavilions was allotted to a Prince of the Imperial family, who lived in it in solitary state. The walls, I believe, of such of these buildings as still remain, are covered with fine tiles, and they contain a quantity of once splendid inlaid furniture, now sorely decayed. In these weird palaces within a palace, all the heirs to the throne, from Achmet I. (1603) until the end of the last century, were immured in rigorous seclusion. Not a breath from the outside world was permitted to reach them, and the horror of sudden and violent death hung over them ceaselessly. All the attendants were deaf mutes, whose ear-drums had been perforated, and their tongues slit. Even the women of the Hareems were such as could never bear children.

Here Prince after Prince passed a sort of vegetable existence—a living death. Othmān III. never once set foot abroad, for over fifty years, and, when he issued from his gilded prison, he had almost forgotten how to talk. Achmet II. passed seven years, and Suleymān II. thirty-nine, in this dreary place. This latter Prince devoted his solitary con-

finement to copying and illuminating the Koran. He only reigned thirty months; and his gentleness caused him to be looked upon as a saint. He was absolutely dazed by the fuller life beyond his prison walls, and often asked to be taken back to it. Selim III., the first of the reforming Sultans, spent fifteen years in the *Kafes*. He, too, had been silent so long, that for many months he hardly knew how to frame his words.

It seems that the *Kafes* were originally erected on humanitarian principles. Achmet I. desired to spare the life of his brother Mustaphā, so he invented the cage, and shut him up in it, feeling certain that therein he could neither conspire, nor provoke rebellion. And does not the Koran say that both these acts "are worthy of execution"? A terrible verse, which has caused the death of many a Mohammedan Prince.

From Mohammed II., 1451, to Mahmūd II., "the Reformer," 1808, no less than four Sultans were deliberately murdered, and five, three of whom afterwards mysteriously disappeared, were forced to abdicate. This same Mahmūd II., the grandfather of his present Majesty, used to relate how his mother, the Sultana Valideh, hid him in an empty stove, to save him from the murderers of his uncle, Selim III., and his brother, Mustaphā IV.; and how, from his place of concealment, he heard the conspirators proclaim him Sultan.

We will now turn to the constitution and etiquette of the Turkish Court, and more especially to that of the Hareem, the true Court of a polygamous monarch.

To begin with the external, as apart from the domestic Court: it has often been asserted that the Sultan shares his spiritual power with the Sheikh-ul-Islām, but as a matter of actual fact, they are, in a measure, independent of each other, as will be explained in the chapter on the Sultan and his Priests. The Sheikh-ul-Islām is the Vicar-General, charged with those details of the spiritual life of the Empire which would be too intricate for the Sultan's unaided examination.

The third greatest personage in the Empire is the Grand Vizir, whose functions somewhat resemble those of our own Prime Minister, though in certain ways, of course, much more limited. He is the supreme chief of the Administration of the Empire. All the other Ministers work under him, he presides at the Privy Council, and appoints almost all the minor officials in the State.

He submits the names of would-be Governors of Provinces, Ambassadors, and such important personages, to His Majesty, but the smaller fry are nominated entirely on his own responsibility, for good or evil. The first Grand Vizir was created by a member of the Abassides dynasty, A.D. 750. In olden times, this office was far from being a pleasant one. Countless Vizirs have made acquaintance with those terrible instruments of death, the bowstring and the cup of poisoned coffee. The last century alone saw something like a hundred perish by these means, or in that terrible "well of blood," the remains of which, in the courtyard of the Castle of the Seven Towers,

still thrill the traveller with a sense of shuddering horror. Most of these Grand Vizirs, many of whom have won lasting fame by their striking administrative talents, rose from the lowest ranks, even out of slavery. The Grand Vizir is invariably addressed as "Your Highness." Not many generations back, his regulation costume was of white satin, lined with ermine, and on his head he wore an egg-shaped turban, blazing with jewels. This was the garb of the Grand Vizir of the day, when Canning had his first interview with Sultan Mahmūd in 1810. Nowadays, His Highness always appears in a modern military uniform, cut in the German fashion, and the pomp and circumstance of his *entourage* has dwindled to the stained and ill-fitting frock-coat, and the unblacked sidespring boots, of the modern Turkish functionary.

The Kizlar-Aghasi, or chief of the Black Eunuchs, ranks, officially, next to the Grand Vizir. The regiment of eunuchs under his command has greatly diminished during the present reign, but their number is still formidable, for they are indispensable to the Hareem system. A few exceedingly old white eunuchs are lodged at Yildiz, but they are rapidly dying out.

The body-guard of page-boys, which used to be quartered in two vast courtyards in the Old Seraglio, has now almost entirely lost its peculiarly Asiatic character. The lads do much the same work as in other Courts—run messages, and attend upon their elders. In exchange for these light duties, they receive their board and lodging, and a fair military education.

Notwithstanding his well-intentioned household reforms, Abd-ul-Hamid's Court still swarms with parasites, in the guise of secretaries, chamberlains, ushers, Palace agents, and so forth. All this petty host is waited on by some three or four hundred slaves, and menial servants, known as "baltadjis." The cooking of the Imperial establishment is on a quite incredible scale. The male and female population of Yildiz, inclusive of the troops in the Palace barracks, cannot, certainly, amount to less than between six and eight thousand persons, all fed at the Sultan's expense. One of the most amusing features of a visit to such portions of the Palace as strangers are allowed to see, is the procession of meals, going from the kitchens to the various apartments. Each meal is enclosed in an enormous wheel-shaped box, divided into compartments, and covered with a piece of black calico, tied over the top, the whole carried on the head of a slave. Under the black covering is another, of silk or velvet, more or less richly embroidered according to the rank of the person who is to consume the viands. There are over four hundred cooks and scullions employed within the Palace, under the direction of a goodly array of Turkish, French, and Italian chefs.

The Hareem, or women's department of the Sultan's household, consists of a number of little courts, or "daïras," each surrounding some one or other of the leading ladies of this amazing female hierarchy, numbering not less than fifteen hundred persons.

Only three Turkish Sultans have ever gone through

the ceremony of marriage. Orkhān II. espoused the Greek Princess Theodora; Sultan Suleymān went through a marriage ceremony with Roxalana; and Abd-ul-Medjid legally married the lovely Besma Effendi, the adopted daughter of a Princess of the royal house of Egypt. The women of the Imperial Hareem are divided into three great classes: the Kadinés, who are more or less legitimate wives, though never officially espoused; the Ikbāls, or favourites, from amongst whom the Kadinés are usually selected; and the Gediklis or Guieuzdés, literally, "the young ladies who are pleasant in the eyes" of their master, who may, in their turn, attain to the dignity of Ikbāls. All these women, who should be of slave origin, constitute a veritable female hierarchy, beginning with Shagirds or novices, and ending with the Kadinés. The majority are either purchased, or stolen, from Circassian or Georgian peasants, at a very tender age, and in so mysterious a manner as to prevent all chance of their relatives ever tracing their whereabouts. In nine cases out of ten, however, if the lady does rise to importance, her identity is revealed, somehow or other, to her own kinsfolk, and it becomes the chief object of her life to obtain rich places for them, by fair means or foul. The Sultan of Turkey, therefore, is almost invariably the son of a slave woman. But, the moment that slave becomes the mother of a Prince, or even of a Princess, of the blood royal, she is set free, and given Imperial rank, and is known as Khāssekī-Sultan, or Royal Princess. As an instance in point, many old residents in Constantinople still remember how Sultan

Mahmūd II. was smitten with a sudden passion for the buxom Hammamjinah (or bath-woman) Besma, who, on becoming the mother of Abd-ul-Aziz, instantly became Khāssekī-Sultan, and eventually rose to the supreme dignity of "Valideh-Sultan."

Besma Sultan, notwithstanding her very humble origin, won a distinguished position at the Ottoman Court. She never forgot that she sprang from the people, and as, although fanatical, she was kindly and unselfish, she was adored by the lower classes. She survived the fall of her son, and died some ten years ago, universally honoured. The present Sultan gave her a State funeral of an unprecedentedly magnificent character. It was this unfortunate Princess who, unwittingly, provided Abd-ul-Aziz with the scissors with which he committed suicide. After that tragic event she lived a very retired life, wholly devoted to charitable works. She built the magnificent Yeni Valideh Djami* at the Ak Seraï, and there she sleeps in a garden, surrounded by the flowers to which, in her lifetime, she had been so devoted.

There is a pretty anecdote told of the good Valideh, when she was building her mosque. She was entitled, by etiquette, to have two minarets, but funds fell short and only one was built. Upon her son offering her the money to erect a second minaret she said, "No, one minaret is enough to call people to prayer, and another would only glorify me; the poor need a fountain." So the fountain, one of the most beautiful in Constantinople, was duly built.

* Djami means mosque.

As all good Mussulmans should have four official wives, so the Sultan has four Kadinés.* Each bears her own distinctive title, and takes precedence accordingly. Death quite recently removed the Bach-Kadiné, or first wife of the reigning Sultan, who was the sister of Zeki Pasha, all too well known for his exploits in the Sasunk.

The three other Kadinés are respectively denominated the Skindji-Kadiné, or Second Lady; the Artanié-Kadiné, or Middle Lady; and the Kutchuk-Kadiné, or Little Lady. When, as stated, a Kadiné becomes the mother of a male child she is called Khāssekī-Sultan, or Royal Princess; when of a daughter, Khāssekī-Kadiné, or Royal Lady. The fact that each of these ladies must, according to Moslim law, have a court equal in every detail, from the Mistress of the Robes down to the lowest scullion, and even to the number of the horses in each stable, explains why some other female personage of the Imperial *entourage* must, perforce, be selected to hold the place and title usually allotted to the wife of a monogamous sovereign. This personage, in the Turkish system, is generally the mother of the reigning Sultan, and is known as the Valideh-Sultan. Should the Sultan be motherless at the time of his accession, his foster-mother takes the position, this relationship being considered almost as sacred as the maternal one.

The present Valideh-Sultan is the foster-mother of Abd-ul-Hamid, and has been described to me as a very able and intelligent woman, of somewhat old-

* The word Sultana, or Sultaness, is not Turkish.

fashioned ideas, who rules the Hareem with the strictest attention to economy and propriety. Every member of the female host at Yildiz owes absolute homage and obedience to the Valideh, whose proudest title is "Tātch-ul-Mestourāt," or "Crown of the Veiled Heads," that is, of all Mohammedan women, who should of course be veiled. The etiquette surrounding the Valideh is almost as formal as that environing the Pādishāh himself. Not even the Khāssekī-Sultan can presume to appear unsummoned before her; and no lady of the Hareem ventures into her presence save in full Court dress, and without any mantle, be the weather bitter cold or stifling hot. When she goes abroad she has a military escort exactly similar to the Sultan's own.

Among the singular and time-honoured privileges of the Valideh is the right, or rather the obligation, of presenting a slave girl, over twelve years old, to the Sovereign, on the night of Kurban Baïram, in each year. His present Majesty pays scant attention to this charming gift, and the maiden is forthwith sent to an establishment at Scutari, which the Sultan has endowed for the higher education of Mohammedan women. She is ultimately given a dowry, and married off to some young officer, or gentleman of the household. It was otherwise in olden times, when the Baïram Maiden not unfrequently rose to be Valideh in her turn.

The reader will easily comprehend what tragedies, plots, and counterplots, the Hareem ambition to attain the proud position of Valideh-Sultan has called

into existence. To quote one example among many: The famous Valideh-Sultan Tarkhann, mother of Mohammed IV., in order to set her son upon the throne, followed the example of Athaliah of old, and literally slew all the seed royal. In 1665 she built the lovely mosque called the Yeni Valideh Djami, at the foot of the Great Bridge. It is some consolation to know that this reprehensible Princess was duly strangled in her own turn. The story of this cruel lady, and of her charming rival, Machpeïka-Sultan, forms the subject of Racine's tragedy, "Bajazet." The terrible struggle between these two beautiful women, for the towering position of Valideh-Sultan, was related to the great French poet by M. de Cezy, then French Ambassador at Constantinople, who saw the unfortunate Bāyazīd, or "Bajazet," "rowed in a boat off the Seraglio." "C'étoit un Prince de bonne mine." Unfortunately for the reputation of Roxalana, Racine seems to have concluded that neither Machpeïka nor Tarkhann were particularly well-sounding names, and substituted those of Roxane and Atalide. Thus, when the play became popular, both in the original French and in its English form, "The Rival Queens," the name of Roxalana came to be associated with crimes which were really committed a good century after her death. A Turkish Sultan, like any other Moslim, may mate with a Christian or with a Jewess, if she find favour in his eyes. But there is no record of any Jewess having risen to high position in the Imperial Hareem. Orkhān, although a sexagenarian, married, for political reasons, the beautiful Theodora, daughter of the

Emperor John Cantacuzenos, and Anna the Empress Regent. She never became a Mohammedan, and is buried at Brusa. This lady, who rebuilt the fine church of St. Andrew in Crisis, now Khodja Mustaphā Pasha Djamesi, had already been twice a widow. She was married without religious rites of any kind. The mother of Mohammed the Conqueror is generally believed to have been a French Princess, daughter of King Charles VI. of France. If this was really so, then that famous Sultan was brother-in-law to our own Richard II., for the Princess in question must have been a sister of Isabella of Valois, the second consort of that unfortunate King. Most of the guide books assert, that she is buried in the Mosque of the Conqueror in Stambul, in a nameless tomb close to his own; but this is not the case: her mausoleum is at Brusa, where she sleeps by the side of her husband, Murād II. Considerable mystery hangs over the origin of this lady. Some historians state that she was a Servian, but the Court tradition—if one may so call it—is that she was French, a fact which would account for the precedence frequently accorded on State occasions to the French Ambassador. Who, then, sleeps in the nameless coffin by the side of Mohammed II.? The Mollahs who frequent the mosque affirm that the Princess who rests there was a Christian, and none other than the unfortunate Irene, for whom the Sultan conceived such a fierce passion shortly after the Conquest. Her influence over him was only equalled by her firm resolve never to abjure her faith. The Sheikh-ul-Islām and his Mollahs

fiercely reproached the Sultan with his over-partiality for a Giaour. He assembled them, by way of answer, in one of the halls of his Palace, in the middle of which Irene stood, covered with a glittering veil. Lifting this suddenly with one hand, so that the exquisite loveliness of the unfortunate Princess was fully revealed to the assembly, the Sultan cried, "You see she is more beautiful than any woman you have ever beheld, fairer than the houris of your dreams! I love her as I do my life! But my life is nothing beside my love for Islām!" Then seizing the long golden tresses of the luckless beauty, he twisted them in his strong grasp, and with one stroke of his scimitar severed her head from her body.

The most reliable Turkish historians are of opinion that, although several Christian women became conspicuous in the Hareem, only Theodora, and the mother of Mohammed II. remained true to their religion.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a number of Italian women, some from Venice and Genoa, and others again, according to Sagrado, from Palermo and Acireale—captured and sold as slaves in their infancy, or downright adventuresses—landed in Constantinople, with no better object than intrigue, and rose to exalted rank in the Imperial Hareem. Of these none were more remarkable than the beautiful Venetian Safiā, better known as "Baffa," a member of the illustrious family of that name, who had been stolen in her youth, and sold to Murād III., at an age when she still remembered her early home on the Grand Canal. She became first Khāsseki-Sultan and

then Valideh, under her son Mohammed III., who, by the way, was one of the hundred and two sons of Murād III., nineteen of whom the Baffa put to death on his accession, so as to secure the throne for her own offspring. She ruled cleverly, at any rate, if not wisely, in her own interests, and those of the Serenissime Republic, and is constantly mentioned in the Venetian and Genoese archives. Her great crime was, that, like Messalina, she corrupted her own son, and notoriously encouraged his infamous habits of debauch. In this she was aided by another Italian, an abominable adventuress, known as *La Sultana Sporca* —or the filthy Sultana—of whom Rycaut tells a story worthy of Burton's version of the Arabian Nights. The Baffa ended miserably—strangled in her bed—and the *Sporca*, so the Genoese papers tell us: "*Le stata assassiné aquella Sultana che si chiama la Sporca, che le fu una vecchia materola*" ("That wicked old woman, the filthy Sultana, has been assassinated"), but how we are not informed. Possibly she also was strangled or poisoned. The Venetian Ambassador corresponded with the Baffa by means of a Jewess, named Chiarezza, who used to carry jewels and baubles to the Seraglio, for sale.

The story of the French mother of Sultan Mahmūd II. who, for aught we know, may have remained a Christian to the end of her life, is narrated elsewhere. Some historians are inclined to think the celebrated Roxalana was a Christian, but, if she was, she certainly did not remain so after her marriage; for, in order to secure her popularity among the Imāms and

Mollahs, she gave very liberally to the mosques, and other Mohammedan charities, and even built a magnificent mosque of her own, which is still standing.

Roxalana's origin is wrapped in mystery. According to some authorities, she was a Russian, hence her name Roxalana or Russolana. The Genoese have claimed her as a Ligurian. In all probability she was a Muscovite slave, sold in the public market. A history of Turkey, published in the early part of the sixteenth century, calls her Hozothya, and says "she is occasionally called Rossa." The influence which she exercised over one of the ablest of the Sultans was absolute. When she began to attract Suleymān's attention, she played her cards with infinite skill and cunning, pretending to be very timid and modest. Gradually, however, she asserted her empire. In order to consolidate it, as already intimated, she gave large sums to the mosques and other Moslim institutions. Her popularity with the religious body once secured, she shut herself up in her apartments, and resolutely refused to see the Pādishāh, unless he consented to marry her publicly—an honour altogether without precedent; for, hitherto, it had sufficed for a lady of the Hareem to become the mother of a male child of the Sultan's, for her to be considered legitimately married to him. But such a timeworn arrangement did not satisfy the vainglorious ambition of Roxalana. She pined for a solemn confirmation of the fact, that she shared not only the pleasures but the power of so great a Prince as Suleymān.

The archives of the Bank of St. George, at Genoa,

contain hundreds of letters from Genoese officials at Galata, giving minute details concerning every important event occurring in the Turkish capital, from a very early date down to the close of the eighteenth century. From one of these letters I extract the following curious and inedited account of Roxalana's marriage. The letter is undated.

"This week, there has occurred in this city a most extraordinary event, one absolutely unprecedented in the history of the Sultans. The Grand Signor Suleymān has taken unto himself a slave woman, from Russia, called Roxalana, as his Empress, and there has been great feasting, and much rejoicing, in consequence. The ceremony took place within the Palace, and the festivities have been magnificent, beyond all record. There was a public procession of all the presents, which the Sultan, and the great people of the land, have made to the said Roxalana. First came two hundred mules, heavily laden with carpets, gold and silver vases, spices, jewels, furniture, and all sorts of household goods. Each mule was accompanied by two slaves, in splendid liveries, and the presents were concealed under scarves of silver and rose-coloured tissue. Then came two hundred camels, equally heavily laden with sumptuous gifts, sent to the Empress by the great ones of the nation, even from very distant parts of the Empire, and, finally, there were eighty black eunuchs, and eighty white eunuchs, most splendidly dressed, who walked behind the presents, and who were intended for the service of the said Empress. Every evening, all the principal streets are gaily illumi-

nated, and there has been much music and feasting. The houses are festooned with flowers, and there are swings erected everywhere, in which the people swing by the hour, and seem very happy. In the old Hippodrome, or At-meidan, a great tribune was set up for the Sultan and his Court. That portion set apart for the Empress and her women was screened by a gilded lattice, through which the ladies could see all that went on in the arena. Here Roxalana and her Court beheld a great tournament, in which both Christian and Mohammedan knights were engaged, and tumblers, and jugglers, and a procession of extraordinary animals from Asia, including two giraffes, with necks so long that they seemed to reach the sky. The Empress sent round among the crowd a number of slaves, who gave the people small presents, either of money or pieces of silk. There was a liberal distribution of bread and fruits, in one of the great courtyards of the Palace. They say that the wedding festivities have cost many thousands of pounds, and this I can easily believe. All the principal people of our colony, together with the Bailio of Venice, and all the great ones of the Venetian colony, have sent presents to the said Empress, and have been received by the Grand Signor, though none, of course, have been allowed to behold his face. There is great talk, all over this country, about this marriage, and no one can understand exactly what it means." *

* There is a confirmation of this account of Roxalana's public marriage in a very rare book, "L'Incoronazione del Sultan Suleymān il Magnifico e le feste chi si fecero—Venezia, 1589,"

They had good cause to find out what it meant, a little later on. By slow degrees, Roxalana obtained an influence over her husband, most pernicious, so far as his domestic affairs were concerned, though, in public matters, she seems to have been of great service to him. A portrait of the famous lady still exists. It is the pendant to a fine portrait by one of the Bellini, given by Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz to Sir Henry Layard, which is possibly still in the possession of Lady Layard at her Venetian Palazzo. In this picture, the famous Sultana is represented in profile, her red hair hanging down her back in two thick braids. On her head is a high-standing crown, filled in with silk, and richly studded with enormous precious stones. Round her neck are several rows of huge pearls. The head-dress, and the general design of the costume, are almost identical with those worn by Catherine Cornaro, Queen of Cyprus, in Titian's celebrated portrait. Roxalana bore the Sultan five children, four sons, Mohammed, Bāyazīd, Selim, and Djeanghir, and one daughter, Mihrima. The heir to the throne, however, was Mustaphā, the son of Selim by a Georgian, who had died in giving him birth. After long persistence, Roxalana persuaded Suleymān that Mustaphā was plotting against his life. The Sultan, in his fury, caused him to be stabbed, thus clearing the way for the succession of his own son Mohammed. Djeanghir, Roxalana's youngest child, delicate and deformed, fretted so cruelly for the companionship of his kinsman

containing a similar account of the gorgeous wedding of this Sultana.

Mustaphā, his friend and playfellow, that he pined away and died. The unhappy mother, it is said, thus punished for her own crime, was never seen to smile again.

A few months afterwards Mohammed sickened and died also. No words can describe the affliction of the parents. Their ambition seemed buried in the coffin of their child. Even the partizans of Roxalana timorously whispered that Allah had thus pronounced for Mustaphā, the rightful heir. She immediately set to work to erect the beautiful mosque of the Shah-zadé, wherein the young Princes sleep. The turbhé is octagonal in shape, the inner wall is richly inlaid with marble mosaic, and the rarest Persian tiles. This mosque, possibly on account of the great maternal sorrow which brought it into being, has always been a favourite with the women of Constantinople.

Notwithstanding her many crimes, Roxalana retained her influence to the last, and died in her bed, not long before her husband. She is buried in the courtyard of the magnificent Suleymānieh Mosque, in a tomb remarkable for its simplicity. She is reported to have cared far more for actual power, than for the pomp and circumstance that often attend it.

Abd-ul-Medjid's marriage with Besma and his subsequent divorce, are very curious incidents in the domestic history of the Turkish Court. The Sultan, it seems, was visiting an Egyptian Princess, the widow of one of the sons of Mehemet Ali, when he saw, and straightway fell in love with, Besma Hanum, Her Highness's adopted daughter. He asked his

hostess to give the young lady to him, an unceremonious demand which she adroitly parried, by replying that the girl was already the promised bride of one of His Majesty's officers. "In that case," quoth the amorous Sultan, "I will marry her myself." And to the astonishment of Stambul, he formally, and, what is more, publicly, espoused her, which did not prevent his divorcing her within the year, in as strictly legal a manner as any ordinary citizen. She soon afterwards became the fourth wife of Fāzil Pasha.

In strict Turkish parlance, the title of Sultana does not exist, but that of Sultan, added to the proper name, is accorded to all ladies of the Imperial blood, daughters and sisters of the Sultan. Thus Lelia Sultan, Fâthmāh Sultan, and so forth. Should one of these ladies condescend, as frequently occurs, to marry a subject, she retains her title and fortune, and her husband may not even sit down before her, unless she gives him leave.

A very important personage in the Hareem is the Hasnada-Ousta, or Grand Mistress of the Robes and Treasurer, generally a respectable and intelligent elderly woman, who acts as Vice-Valideh, and attends to all those many household details which, in so vast an establishment, must perforce escape the Valideh-Sultan's own eye. On more than one occasion, *faute de mieux*, the Hasnada-Ousta has risen to the position of Valideh-Sultan.

The Imperial Hareem is constantly fed by a stream of slave children, secretly purchased from remote

regions, and privately conveyed into the Palace. During their earlier years they are called Alaikés, and are placed in the care of certain elderly and experienced women, known as Kalfas, or mistresses, who initiate them into all the subtle arts which delight the Oriental taste. Their manners are especially attended to, and they are taught music and dancing. In due time they begin to act as attendants on the Kadinés and the Imperial Princesses, and sometimes rise to the highest rank.

Formerly, Oriental costume was universal in the Hareem, and we possess many descriptions of the variety and splendour of the dresses worn by the Sultan's favourites, and their attendants. In the old Seraglio, the rooms were all lined with marvellous Persian tiles, specimens of which still linger on the ruined walls. Low divans, covered with the costliest embroideries, were the only furniture permitted, save the priceless carpets covering the floors, and the little inlaid tables, which served to support the coffee-cups, and other trifles, used by the ladies, who, when they went abroad, drove in picturesque arabas, the silken awnings of which were sometimes studded with gems. The Sultan himself was never seen by Giaour eyes. There is a fine old print, at the British Embassy at Pera, of the presentation of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe (then Mr. Canning) to Sultan Mahmūd II., in 1810. The Sultan is shown in full Oriental costume, squatted on a carpet, and enclosed in a huge alcove grated like a birdcage. The curtains are drawn, leaving the lattice bare, so that the Pādishāh is visible through

the bars. This, at the time, was considered a most extraordinary innovation. Previous Ambassadors had never seen the cage, much less the Imperial bird within it.

A distinguished lady, who has the *entrée* to the Hareem, assures me that its present inmates dress more or less in European fashion, but almost invariably in the costliest conceivable tea-gowns, from Paris and Vienna. They wear magnificent diamonds and other jewels, and appear to lead a very happy life.

"It is very amusing," so I was informed by an eye-witness, "to note what happens at the Palace when a Sultana is ill. They stretch a great black curtain across her room. Then the chief Black Eunuch brings in a doctor, generally a European, and the lady thrusts out her tongue and hand through a hole in the curtain, so that he may feel one and see the other, without looking on her face."

The literary efforts of the more endowed Turkish women have hitherto taken the form of poetry, this being, of course, a result of the secluded existence which prevents their observing worldly matters with sufficient closeness to impart much value to their prose compositions. However, within the past few months, a novel has appeared, in our own language, from the pen of an accomplished Turkish lady, who has assumed the pseudonym of Adalet. The work has exceptional merit, not only as an excellent picture of life in a modern Turkish Hareem, but on account of its literary form and vivid word-painting. Of thirty-four Sultans, eleven have been distinguished poets. It may have

been this example on the part of their masters which led some of the ladies of the Imperial Hareem to apply themselves to the same department of literature. The most remarkable of these Royal poetesses was Zeyneb Effendi, a contemporary of Mohammed the Conqueror, who sang the splendid career of that Pādishāh in glowing strains. Her poems are said to have something of the Sybillic about them; and the tradition runs, that Mohammed II. was far from being insensible to her charms, or to the flattery of her verses.

Another distinguished poetess became celebrated throughout the Turkish Empire under Suleymān the Great. Mirhī Hanum was the daughter of a Grand Vizir who for a short time enjoyed Imperial favour. She seems to have been left in wealthy circumstances by her father, who was strangled, and to have fallen desperately in love with Alexander, a son of the Grand Vizir Sinān Pasha, a celebrated Italian renegade. This passion does not, however, appear to have been reciprocated, and the lady, whose beauty and talent have been recorded by her contemporaries, vowed to wear the amber necklace of virginity all the rest of her days. Some of her poetry is still extant. Its passionate character leads one to suppose the accomplished poetess to have been well acquainted with the Greek language, and with the works of Sapho. In the seventeenth century, another Turkish poetess, Sidi, rose to fame. She was the daughter of Kamer Mohammed Pasha, and when only seven years old was able to repeat the entire Koran by heart. Two of her poems, the "Pleasures of Light" and the

"Divan," still frequently appear in collections of Turkish poetry. In the last she touchingly laments the tragic death of her father. She died in 1703. A sister of Mahmūd the Reformer, Hatibutallah Sultan, was a distinguished poetess, as well, if we may believe Miss Pardoe, who visited her, as an astonishingly beautiful woman. She seems to have incurred her brother's displeaşure, and was banished in 1835 to her Yali on the Bosphorus for having interfered in political matters; there she died somewhat mysteriously. The last poem she ever wrote, "The Song of Death," contains certain allusions to poison, which have induced the belief that she may have killed herself. Her work has been frequently reprinted, and as far as may be judged by the translation by Servant de Sugny, quoted by the Countess Dora d'Istria, it is exceedingly beautiful.

It must not for a moment be concluded that because a woman is an inmate of the Seraï, she does not possess a lawful husband of her own. Many of the ladies are the wives of Pashas, and, like our own Court ladies, have only a stated period of waiting in each year. But the majority of the married denizens of this world within a world, be they mistresses or maids, have husbands holding some Palace appointment, and apartments and families within its walls. The Hareem ladies have a fair share of liberty. In the regulation *yashmac* and *feridjé* they can go out driving and paying visits whenever they choose, and they haunt the bazaars, the Grande Rue de Pera, and other public promenades. They have, moreover, many

entertainments among themselves. There is a very pretty theatre in the gardens of the Palace, where operas and ballets are frequently given for their entertainment. In summer they swarm up the Bosphorus, to the Sweet Waters of Asia, and in spring and autumn to the Sweet Waters of Europe; but they are never seen on foot.

As to the Sultan himself, his life is of the simplest and most arduous. He rises at six, and works with his secretaries till noon, when he breakfasts. After this he takes a drive, or a row on the lake within his vast park. When he returns he give audiences to the Grand Vizir, the Sheikh-ul-Islām, and other officials. At eight o'clock he dines, sometimes alone, not unfrequently in the company of one of the Ambassadors. Occasionally His Majesty entertains the wives and daughters of the Ambassadors, and other Pera notabilities, at dinner. The meal, usually a very silent one, is served in gorgeous style, *à la française*, on the finest of plate and the most exquisite of porcelain. The treasures of silver and Sèvres at Yildiz are *hors ligne* both in quantity and quality. Very often in the evenings Abd-ul-Hamid plays duets on the piano with his younger children. He is very fond of light music, and his favourite score is that of *La Fille de Madame Angot*. He dresses like an ordinary European gentleman, always wearing a frock-coat, the breast of which, on great occasions, is richly embroidered, and blazing with decorations.

The present Sultan is the first who has done away with the diamond aigrettes formerly attached to the

Imperial turban or fez. The President of the United States is no more informal than the Sultan in his manner of receiving guests. He places his visitor beside him on the sofa, and himself lights the cigarette he offers him. He is himself an inveterate smoker; the cigarette is never out of his fingers. As the Pādishāh is supposed to speak no language but Turkish and Arabic, His Majesty, though a good French scholar, carries on conversation through a dragoman.

Quite recently, a very great lady had the honour of dining with His Majesty—the first Turkish sovereign, by the way, who has ever admitted a Christian woman to his table. After dinner, the lady noticed a mousetrap, which had been forgotten, on one of the chairs.

"Oh!" said the Sultan, "that *is* an excellent trap! It was sent to me from England, and I have caught ten mice in it to-day!"

The following description of the old Turkish costume is one of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's happiest attempts at word-painting. It occurs in a letter addressed to the Countess of Mar, dated Adrianople, April 18th, 1717, and devoted to an account of her visits to Hafiten-Sultan. The widow of Sultan Mustaphā II., although still a young woman, had re-married with the ancient Bākir Effendi, then Secretary of State, and over eighty years of age.

"I was led," says she, "into a large room, with a sofa the whole length of it, adorned with white marble pillars, like a *ruelle*, covered with pale blue

figured velvet on a silver ground, with cushions of the same, where I was desired to repose till the Sultana appeared, who had contrived this manner of reception to avoid rising up at my entrance, though she made me an inclination of the head when I rose up to her. I was very glad to see a lady that had been distinguished by the favour of an Emperor, to whom beauties were every day presented from all parts of the world. But she did not seem to me to have been half so beautiful as the fair Fatima I saw at Adrianople, though she had the remains of a fine face, more decayed by sorrow than time. But her dress was something so surprisingly rich that I cannot help describing it.

"She wore a vest," says Lady Mary, "called *dulma*, which differs from a *caftan* by longer sleeves and folding over at the bottom. It was of purple cloth, straight to her shape, and thick set, on each side down to her feet and round the sleeves, with pearls of the best water, of the same size that their buttons generally are. You must not suppose that I mean as large as those of my Lord ——, but about the bigness of a pea; and to these buttons large loops of diamonds, in the form of those gold loops so common on birthday coats. This habit was tied at the waist with two large tassels of smaller pearls, and round the arm embroidered with large diamonds. Her shift was fastened at the bottom with a large diamond-shaped lozenge; her girdle, as broad as the broadest English ribbon, entirely covered with diamonds. Round her neck she wore three chains,

which reached to her knees; one of large pearl, at the bottom of which hung a fine coloured emerald, as big as a turkey egg; another consisting of two hundred emeralds closely joined together, of the most lovely green, perfectly matched, every one as large as a half-crown piece and as thick as three crown pieces; and another of small emeralds, perfectly round. But her earrings eclipsed all the rest. They were two diamonds, shaped exactly like pears, as large as a big hazel-nut. Round her *talpoche* she had four strings of pearl, the whitest and most perfect in the world, at least enough to make four necklaces, every one as large as the Duchess of Marlborough's, and of the same shape, consisting of a large ruby for the middle stone, and round them twenty drops of clean diamonds to each. Besides this, her head-dress was covered with bodkins of emeralds and diamonds. She wore large diamond bracelets, and had five rings on her fingers, except Mr. Pitt's the largest I ever saw in my life. It is for jewellers to compute the value of these things, but, according to the common estimation of jewels in our part of the world, her whole dress must be worth a hundred thousand pounds sterling. This I am sure of, that no European Queen has half the quantity; and the Empress's jewels, though very fine, would look very mean next hers. She gave me a dinner of fifty dishes of meat, which (after their fashion) were placed on the table but one at a time, and was extremely tedious. But the magnificence of her table answered very well to that of her dress. The knives were of gold, and the

hafts set with diamonds. But the piece of luxury which grieved my eyes was the table-cloth and napkins, which were all teffany, embroidered with silk and gold, in the finest manner, in natural flowers. It was with the utmost regret I made use of these costly napkins, which were as finely wrought as the finest handkerchiefs that ever came out of this country. You may be sure that they were entirely spoiled before dinner was over. The sherbet (which is the liquor they drink at meals) was served in china bowls, but the covers and salvers were of massy gold. After dinner, water was brought in gold basins, and towels of the same kind with the napkins, which I very unwillingly wiped my hands upon; and coffee was served in china with gold soucoups." *

By-and-by she asked Lady Mary to walk in her garden, and one of her slaves immediately brought her a *pellice* of rich brocade, lined with sables. "I waited on her into the garden, which had nothing in it remarkable but the fountains; and from thence she showed me all her apartments. In her bed-chamber her toilet was displayed, consisting of two looking-glasses, the frames covered with pearls, and her night *talpoche* set with bodkins of jewels, and near it three vests of fine sable, every one of which is, at least, worth a thousand dollars (two hundred pounds English money). I don't doubt but these rich habits were purposely placed in sight, though they seemed negligently thrown on the sofa. When I took my leave of her I was complimented with perfumes, as at the Grand

* Saucers.

Vizir's, and presented with a very fine embroidered handkerchief. Her slaves were to the number of thirty, besides ten little ones, the eldest not above seven years old. These were the most beautiful girls I ever saw, all richly dressed; and I observed that the Sultana took a great deal of pleasure in these lovely children, which is a vast expense; for there is not a handsome girl of that age to be bought under a hundred pounds sterling. They wore little garlands of flowers, and their own hair braided, which was all their head-dress; but their habits were all of gold stuffs. These served her coffee kneeling, brought water when she washed, etc. 'Tis a part of the business of the older slaves to take care of these young girls, to teach them to embroider, and to serve them as carefully as if they were children of the family. Now, do you imagine I have entertained you all this while with a relation that has, at least, received many embellishments from my hand? This, you will say, is but too like the Arabian tales. These embroidered napkins! and a jewel as large as a turkey's egg! You forget, dear sister, those very tales were written by an author of this country, and (excepting the enchantments) are a real representation of the manners here. We travellers are in very hard circumstances. If we say nothing but what has been said before us, we are considered dull."

The following curious letter, now "done into English" for the first time, is taken from the Genoese Archives. Though evidently written by some important personage, it bears neither name nor date;

but it is pretty well established that it belongs to the year 1542. It gives a vivid glimpse of the Hareem of Suleymān the Magnificent, and it is interesting to note how perfectly this account coincides with those of later visitors to the Seraglio, even down to about seventy years ago, up till which time the etiquette of the Ottoman Court remained utterly unchanged.

"When you go to the Seraglio," says the writer, who evidently quotes his wife's account of her visit, "you have to enter by a gate which is very richly gilded, and is called the 'Gate of Perpetual Delight.' Sometimes you will see over it, stuck upon the point of a pole, the head of a Grand Vizir, or of some other personage, who has been decapitated early in the morning, at the caprice of the Grand Signor. Then you enter the first courtyard, which is surrounded by arches, like the cloister of a Franciscan monastery. This is where the white eunuchs live, and you will generally see a number of them walking about, dressed in their extraordinary costumes, with their pointed turbans and flowing robes of striped silk. They look for all the world like mummified old women, and are, for the most part, very thin and shrivelled. Their duty is to attend upon the Grand Signor when he goes out in State, and also to keep order among the white pages, mostly Christian lads, stolen from their parents, to the number of about 300 to 400 each year; some of these boys are very good-looking and wear magnificent dresses. Their cheeks are plump, and their eyebrows (painted) meet, and they wear very rich garments. Very strange things

are told of them, but these things are common hereabouts, and nobody thinks much about them."

"Next you pass into another courtyard, where dwells the Kizlar Agha, or chief of the Black Eunuchs, a very great personage indeed, who holds the same rank as the Grand Vizir. There are several hundred black eunuchs. These, in contradistinction to the white (who, as I have said, are very thin), are monstrously fat. They are the veriest savages, and rarely acquire the knowledge of how to read or write. They are deputed to keep watch and ward over the Kadinés, or wives and favourites of the Sultan, who has innumerable female slaves, who dwell in a series of small but very beautiful palaces, each under the management of a great lady of the Court. No one knows the number of these ladies, there must be hundreds of them, and they are of all nationalities. When they go out into the city (which they do very rarely) they are so closely veiled that you cannot distinguish their features, but only their eyes.

"When they go abroad these ladies wear the *yashmac*, made of a gold stuff heavily fringed, and confined to the head by a crown blazing with jewels. The figure is concealed by a cloak of the richest brocade or velvet. Sometimes you may have the chance of seeing as many as one hundred *arabas*, or carts, very splendid and richly gilded, drawn by gaily decorated bullocks, each containing a number of these great ladies, with their children and slaves. These processions are a most gorgeous sight. Each cart has as many as four mounted eunuchs to protect it from the curiosity of

the public, who bow their faces almost to the earth, or avert them entirely as the caravan passes. I know an Italian lady of this city who has paid a visit to the wife of Sultan Suleymān." (This was certainly not Roxalana, who was not married to Suleymān until some years later.) "'When I entered the kiosk in which she lives,' said this lady, 'I was received by many eunuchs in splendid costumes blazing with jewels, and carrying scimitars in their hands. They led me to an inner vestibule, where I was divested of my cloak and shoes and regaled with refreshments. Presently an elderly woman, very richly dressed, accompanied by a number of young girls, approached me, and, after the usual salutation, informed me that the Khāssekī-Sultan was ready to see me. All the walls of the kiosk in which she lives are covered with the most beautiful Persian tiles, and the floors are of cedar and sandal-wood, which give out the most delicious odour. I advanced through an endless row of bending female slaves, who stood on either side of my path. At the entrance to the apartment in which the Sultan's wife condescended to receive me, the elderly lady who had accompanied me all the time made me a profound reverence, and beckoned to two girls to give me their aid, so that I passed into the presence of the Sultan's wife leaning upon their shoulders. The Khāssekī, who is a stout but beautiful young woman,* sat upon silk cushions striped with silver, near a latticed window overlooking the sea. Numerous slave women, blazing with jewels, attended

* She may have been the mother of poor young Mustaphā, who was sacrificed, some years later, to the ambition of Roxalana.

upon her, holding fans, pipes for smoking, and many objects of value.*

"'When we had selected from these, the great lady, who rose to receive me, extended her hand and kissed me on the brow, and made me sit at the edge of the divan, on which she reclined. She asked many questions concerning our country, and our religion, of which she knew nothing whatever, and which I answered as modestly and as discreetly as I could. I was surprised to notice, when I had finished my narrative, that the room was full of women, who, impelled by curiosity, had come to see me, and to hear what I had to say.

"'The Khāssekī-Sultan now entertained me with an exhibition of dancing girls and music, which was very delectable. When the dancing and music were over, refreshments were served upon trays of solid gold sparkling with jewels. As it was growing late, and I felt afraid to remain longer, lest I should vex Her Highness, I made a motion of rising to leave. She immediately clapped her hands, and several slaves came forward, in obedience to her whispered commands, carrying trays heaped up with beautiful stuffs, and some silver articles of fine workmanship, which the Princess pressed me to accept. After the usual salutations the old woman who first escorted me into the Imperial presence conducted me out, and I was led from the room in precisely the same manner in which I had entered it, down to the foot

* Even now these slave girls are often allowed to deck themselves in jewels belonging to their mistresses.

of the staircase, where my own attendants awaited me.'"

Quaint old Knolles gives us a glowing description of a pageant organised by Sultan Achmet, with a view to dazzle the Persian Ambassador, in which the Pādishāh appeared in the midst of three-score archers, arrayed "in a rich robe of cloath of gold imbroidered with perles and diamonds; his slaues were inriched after the same maner; his turbant couered with fine plumes of black heron's feathers, inriched with great Diamonds, and a chain of the same stones about the lower part of his turbant; vpon his little finger he had a diamond of large bignes and inestimable price, which gave a maruelous great light. He was proudly mounted vpon a goodly horse richly caparsoned, the saddle was embroidred with gold, pearle, and Diamonds, the stirrup of pure gold set with many diamonds, and from the horse's neck did hang great tassels of them, before him vpon his saddle bow a Leopard couered with cloath of gold; with a great number of other Pages who were very beautifull, chosen amongst the infants of the tribute, and appointed for the pleasures of their master; whose garments after the Turkish maner were pretious, and made of rich cloth of gold curled. They were followed by a great troup of yong men plainly attired in cloath, having vpon their heads yellow caps pointed in form of a sugar loafe, and these were ordained to serve the Sultan's pages."

After this, and much more to the same effect, worthy Master Knolles proceeds to give us a con-

temporary account of Seraglio life, whereby we may conclude that "Achmet" was certainly not blessed with a happy domestic circle.

"The day after the marriage, the Grand Seignior did cruelly beat his Sultana, the mother of this daughter, whom he had married to the Captain Bassa; he stabbed her with his handjarre, or dagger, through the cheeke and trod her under his foot. The reason was because shee had strangled a fauorit of his, which was one of his sister's slaves, whom the Grand Seignior hauing seene, and being enamoured with her, sent for her. The Sultana hearing thereof, caused her to be brought to her lodging, where shee stript her of her apparrell, strangled her, and put her clothes upon one of her owne slaues, whom she sent to the Sultan instead of the other, and at her returne strangled her also; as she had done many others when they once appeared to bee with child by the Grand Seignior."

The Conqueror, shortly after taking possession of Constantinople, built himself a vast Palace in the heart of the city, known for centuries as the old Palace, or "Eski Seraï," but it was soon abandoned for the new Palace, or Seraglio. As early as 1480, this Palace presented a dilapidated appearance, and was inhabited by the wives of deceased Sultans and their attendants, who were relegated there to end their days in gorgeous captivity. From the end of the first half of the reign of Suleymān—whose wife Roxalana was the mother of the first Sultan born within its walls—to that of the late Abd-ul-Medjid, the Seraglio was the official

residence of all the Sultans of Turkey. In 1865 it was partially destroyed by a fire, which burnt down eight thousand houses in Stambul. Some of its most interesting kiosks disappeared in the flames, and Sultan Abd-ul-Medjid resolved to quit a Palace with so many gloomy associations, and transfer the Imperial residence to the other side of the Bosphorus, where he built the Dolma Baghtcheh. This enormous, and in many ways extremely beautiful Palace, which the Armenian architect Balian designed in an order of architecture of his own invention—a mixture of Renaissance and Saracenic—is built of the purest marble, and produces an admirable effect, rising as it does directly from the water of the Bosphorus on the European side. It is sumptuously furnished within, but not with much taste. Here Abd-ul-Medjid lived, and here his successor, Abd-ul-Aziz, was doomed, on the morning of May 27th, 1871, to abdicate in favour of Murād V. Adjacent is another new Palace, the Tcheragan, the scene of the tragic death of Abd-ul-Aziz, on June 5th of the same year. On the other side of the Bosphorus, is the Beylerbey Seraï, altogether the most successful architectural achievement of modern times in Turkey. Both externally and internally it is delightfully Oriental, and its artistic loveliness enchanted the Empress Eugénie on the occasion of her visit in 1869, although her own rooms were furnished exactly like her suite of apartments at the Tuilleries. The reigning Sultan never inhabits either of these three residences. They are associated in his mind with the awful series of tragedies which

followed the death of his uncle Aziz, and which produced so sinister an effect upon his subsequent career. Foreign sovereigns are still entertained at Beylerbey, and travellers to Constantinople are allowed to visit it on the days they are escorted over the Seraglio and the Treasury by one of His Majesty's aides-de-camp.

Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid lives at Yildiz Kiosk, and only leaves it twice a year: once on the fifteenth of Ramazān, when he proceeds in state to the Seraglio to venerate the relics of the Prophet—to wit, his cloak and his beard, "which is three inches long, of light brown colour, and without gray hairs," a decayed tooth, which he lost at the Battle of Oherd, and an impression of his foot, made when he mounted his steed, Borak, or else when he lifted a heavy stone to build into the Ka'bah at Mecca. The second time the present Sultan is visible outside the gates of Yildiz, is on the morning of the Buyouk, or the Kurban Baïram, when he receives the homage of the great personages of the Moslim world, in the Grand Hall of the Dolma Baghtcheh, said to be the largest in the world. On this occasion the Sheriff of Mecca, the Grand Vizir, the Sheikh-ul-Islām, and all the priests and great people of Islām, the Ministers, the Military and Naval Officers, and the household, with gestures of the profoundest humility, salute the Shadow of God by raising the right hand from the floor to the lips and kissing the end of the silken sash which hangs over His Majesty's arm. The Sultan has the supreme satisfaction, as soon as the apartment is clear of the sterner sex, of receiving (and unveiled,

too) the Sultana mother and all the ladies of the Imperial Hareem, and of the hareems of the great Officers of State, who go through exactly the same ceremony as the gentlemen. They wear a costume of exceeding magnificence, a sort of compromise between the old Turkish Court dress and a modern tea-gown, and are adorned with all their finest jewels. This must be a delightful scene—but the Pādishāh enjoys it alone. When the ladies have retired, the servants are admitted, from their chief to the lowest scullion. Throughout the whole ceremony, I am assured, the Sultan stands immovable like a marble statue, rarely speaking a word to anybody. In past years the Ambassadors, their wives, and a few favoured guests, were permitted to see the ceremony from a balcony, but since the recent troubles this privilege has been abolished.

Of the pretty ceremony of the Selāmlick,* which has been so often described, I will only say that it is less an impressive, than a picturesque, spectacle. In olden times the Sultan's Friday visit to the mosque was the occasion for an extraordinary display of Oriental pomp. It was splendid even in the reign of Aziz, and I possess an engraving of Sultan Abd-ul-Medjid going to the Selāmlick at the Ahmedieh Mosque in 1850,

* The word Selāmlick, from the Arabic Salām—peace or salutation—is usually employed to describe the male department of a Turkish household, as distinguished from the Hareemlick, or women's dwelling. It also signifies the State visit of the Khaliph to the mosque on Fridays, where he literally goes to salām or salute Allah and His Prophet.

which represents him on horseback, wearing a flowing mantle of white cashmere, with a heron's feather stuck in his fez, blazing with diamonds. A few Europeans in the crowd wear the dress of that now remote period, the ladies close bonnets adorned with drooping feathers, much to the amusement apparently of their Mohammedan sisters, whose graceful *yashmacs* barely hide their laughing countenances. What struck me as most charming in Abd-ul-Hamid's visit to the mosque of the Hamidieh, was the beauty of the *mise en scène.* From the well-kept, but by no means superelegant kiosk, from which strangers are permitted to view the pageant, a splendid view is obtained of Seraglio Point, Sancta Sophia, the Golden Horn, the Sea of Marmara, and the Princes Islands—a panorama of matchless beauty. The troops, with their red fez, line the route from the Palace to the snow-white mosque, which looks for all the world as if it were made of sugar. Presently the Sultan drives swiftly past. Nobody cheers except the troops, and they not very loudly. A flock of Mohammedan women of the lower classes, veiled in thick white linen, stand in the background, where all the morning they have occupied a position on the top of a wall, just opposite the iron gates, whence they disperse like snow before the sun, as soon as the Commander of the Faithful has said his prayers. He does not dally long over them, and gallops home as fast as his horses can fly along the red-sanded road to the Palace, very glad at heart, probably, at having escaped assassination.

The following description of Yildiz Kiosk has been recently sent to me by a friend, who knows it well:

"Yildiz Kiosk, which means Star Kiosk, has been entirely built by the present Sultan. The only portion of it visible to the ordinary mortal is the Selāmlick, which you can see rising over the waters of the Bosphorus, above the trees of the fine park. From a distance, except that it is built of white marble, it does not present an imposing appearance; it might be the house of a *nouveau riche*. Another part occasionally shown is a small kiosk near the gate, from which distinguished visitors and tourists are permitted to witness the procession of the 'Selāmlick.' The rest of the edifice—which, like all other Turkish palaces, consists of an aggregation of large and small buildings linked together by terraces, bridges, and gardens—is completely hidden from view, and no unauthorised person may approach within two hundred yards. The Selāmlick is a large square house, with spacious rooms and staircases, in which the Sultan receives the foreign Ambassadors. The rooms are handsomely furnished in ebony richly inlaid with ivory—a style peculiar to Yildiz—but the curtains and carpets, although gorgeous, are in the worst taste. The mirrors and chandeliers are superb, and there are a few good pictures—amongst others a portrait of President Cleveland and another of the German Emperor.

"The Hareemlick is situated within the park, and is exceedingly rich in rare marbles and splendid

furniture — mostly Italian or Viennese. Here too, the chandeliers are gorgeous, and of exceptional size. In the Hareemlick the Sultan receives his foster-mother, the Valideh-Sultan, and his wives and daughters. Sometimes he will spend the evening here with his favourite Kadiné and children, and play the piano for their amusement.

"There are three principal gates to Yildiz Kiosk: the Kultuk Kapu, which is open all day long, and gives admission to the Ambassadors, Ministers, and other officials; the Sultanate Kapussu, or Gate of Ceremonies, which is only used by the Sultan; and a third opening into the park, close to the Hareem, which is used by the Valideh and the Princesses. Three rows of walls surround the Palace, between each pair of which there is space for many small kiosks, inhabited by the great officers of State and the servants. These are handsomely furnished in a style we usually associate with first-class lodging-houses, in which that class of furniture which was in vogue in the early Victorian epoch has taken refuge—heavy mahogany, carved chairs, and startling carpets. There are, moreover, three large barracks, accommodating between 5,000 and 6,000 soldiers. The gardens are very lovely and well kept. In the richly-wooded park of 20,000 acres there is an artificial lake, on which Abd-ul-Hamid and his intimates cruise in a small but very elegant electric launch. In the park, too, is the theatre or large hall, with a fair-sized stage and auditorium, richly decorated in red and gold. The Sultan's seat is in the gallery, immediately facing the

stage, and his guests sit behind him, for on no account may mortal man turn his back upon the Shadow of God.

"The ladies of the Hareem occupy the gallery, but they are never present when the Sultan entertains Europeans. The scenery is good; but the orchestra, strange to relate, is immediately above the Sultan's seat, on account of the etiquette already alluded to. Deep in the park is a Kiosk surrounded by a high wall, in which Abd-ul-Hamid keeps his mad brother Murād a close prisoner. I am in a position to assure you that he really is mad, but well and kindly cared for; no one may approach within a hundred yards or more of his house.

"Although the Sultan has resolutely resisted the introduction of electric light into Constantinople, because he mistook the word dynamo for dynamite, he uses it in his own palace.

"There is a prison attached to the Palace, and also, so the knowing declare, a torture chamber. This may be doubted; but anything is possible in Stambul,* and, after all, it may be true. Some of the Palace slaves and servants do certainly get

* The Turkish name *Istambol*, corrupted into Stambul, is derived from the Greek εἰς τὴν πόλιν (ees teen poleen), *i.e.* "to town," or "in town," by which term the Greek-speaking inhabitants of this day refer to that part of the city. Throughout Turkey and Greece, Constantinople is still alluded to as ἡ πόλις, *i.e.* "town," and people speak of going to "town," instead of saying "to Constantinople." In all official documents, however, and on their coins, the Turks use the word *Constantinieh*, the Arabic form for Constantinople, and not *Istambol*.

severely beaten, and many have disappeared altogether, and very mysteriously."

One of the most curious sights at Yildiz is to see the soldiers of the guard eating their iftar, or evening, meal in Ramazān. They have extra rations then; but at sunset, before touching a morsel of food, they kneel and touch the earth with their foreheads, and say their evening prayer. Then they fall to with the hearty appetite of youth, and devour the succulent pilaf abundantly supplied them by their Imperial master.

The stories which have become so widespread in Europe, of the wholesale drowning of ladies of the Seraglio in the Bosphorus, are not very greatly exaggerated. We have no less than three well authenticated cases, in which as many as between 200 and 300 have been sent to the bottom of the sea, tied up in the traditional sack. These terrible executions usually occurred after some conspiracy to depose or murder one or other of the Sultans.

The worst case, however, took place in the reign of the mad Ibrāhim I., one of the most detestable of the Turkish sovereigns. In the midst of one of his debauches, he suddenly conceived the horrible idea of tying *all* the women of his Seraglio up in sacks. They were seized in the dead of night, thrust into bags, and thrown into the Bosphorus. But one of them escaped, floated, was picked up at sea by a European vessel, and brought to Paris.

As related elsewhere, Sultan Mahmūd II. caused all the women of his brother Mustaphā's Hareem to be drowned in a similar manner; and it will be within the memory of people still living, that a good many years ago the custom of drowning unfaithful women was frequent all over the country, especially in Constantinople.

Even in these days, it is easy enough, in Turkey, to get rid of troublesome wives and slaves, without fear of detection, for no man, not even an Inspector of Police, may enter any hareem on any pretext, nor inquire as to what has taken place within it, unless he is actually called in by the master of the house.

CHAPTER II.

THE SULTAN AND HIS PRIESTS.

THE Sultan is not unfrequently described by Europeans as the "Pope" of the Mohammedan religion, whereas he really is no more than its Khaliph* or Supreme Chief, and in no sense an ecclesiastic. He takes no prominent part in the performance of divine service, and wears no distinctive sacerdotal costume; and although he is the Prophet's earthly representative and Vicar, he is not a Pontiff, properly so called, his duties being limited to watching over the interests of Islām, to rousing, when necessary, its spirit of fanaticism, and to defending it generally against its enemies. In any hour of danger he is bound to appeal, through the Sheikh-ul-Islām, and his army of Ulemās, Imāms,

* The real meaning of the word Khalīfah, *anglicè* Caliph or Khaliph, is *successor*, *lieutenant*, or *vice-regent*. In the Qur'an or Koran it stands for Adam, God's representative upon earth; and also for David. See Sūrah xxxviii. 25: "O David, verily we have made thee a vice-regent" (*Khalīfah*). According to all Sunni Mohammedans it is absolutely necessary that the Khalīfah be a man of mature years (adult), sane, free, learned as a divine, and a powerful ruler, just, and of the Quraish, the tribe to which the Prophet belonged. The Shi'ahs hold, in addition, that he should be one of

Mollahs, Softas, and Dervishes, to the Faithful at large, and command them in the name of Allah and His Prophet to rise and fight for the sacred Standard. Although the Sultan is the Shadow of God, and as such so deeply venerated that, even as late as the first part of the present century, he was approached by his Ministers and other subjects, not on bended knees merely, but on all-fours, he can promulgate no new dogmas, neither can he increase nor diminish, in the smallest degree, any detail of the Islāmic ritual, which has remained unchanged since it was first established in the sixth century.

The assumption by the Sultans of Turkey of a position resembling in some ways that of the Pope in the Latin Church, was in fact the outcome of chance, favoured by circumstances. The Roman Pontiff can point in confirmation of his extraordinary claims to certain texts in the Gospels, and, notably, to the famous words, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church," but the Sultan cannot appeal to a single line in the Koran in sanction of those tremendous spiritual and temporal pretensions whereby he assumes such soaring titles as "Zil-'llah," Shadow of God; "Ālem-Penāh," Refuge of the World; "Smre-

the descendants of the Prophet's own family. This is rejected by the Sunni and Wahhabis. The condition that the Khalïfah should be of the Quraish is exceedingly important, for thereby the Ottoman Sultans, very few of whom have fulfilled the moral obligations above enumerated, fail to establish their claim. There exists, moreover, no single passage in any Mohammedan work to justify the supreme position to which they have elevated themselves.—See Hughes's "Dictionary of Islām," p. 263.

ul-Muslemin," Pontiff of Mussulmans; "Hunkiar," or Manslayer; and, finally, of "Pādishāh," or Father of all the Sovereigns of the Earth; titles gradually conceded, indeed, but unknown to the earlier Khaliphs, who aspired to no divine honours, holding themselves merely to be "the servants of the servants of God."*

* The word *Sultan*, usually called *Soudan* by the mediæval chroniclers, literally means "strength or might," "authority," paraphrased "Prince of Royal Blood." It was never used by any of the earlier Khaliphs until, with the permission of the Seljkidian Emperor Alaïddin, Osmān I. assumed it in 1299. This marks the beginning of the Turkish monarchy. The title of Sultan is given to all the children and brothers and sisters of the reigning Emperor. But for a male it is written before the name, Sultan Mahmūd, Sultan Selim; while in the case of a woman it is placed last, Esmé Sultan, Fâthmāh Sultan, etc. The title Khān, which is of Tartar origin, and means "high and mighty," begins to appear in the fifth century, and has been used by all Turkish Sultans in addition to their other titles. Gran' Turco (Grand Turk), or Gran' Signor (Grande Signore), is purely of Italian origin, and is used in all the Italian documents from the fifteenth to the end of the eighteenth centuries. It has no exact equivalent in Turkish. The most august of all the titles of a Turkish Sultan is that of "Pādishāh," derived from the Persian *pad* (protector) and *shah* (king). It has occasionally been bestowed upon European sovereigns by the Sultan. The first on whom this honour was conferred was Francis I. of France. The Emperor of Germany has never been addressed as Pādishāh, only as "Nemtché Tchā'cāri" (Cæsar of Germany), and the Russian Czars as "Mosgov Tchāri" and as "Roucia Tchāri" (Cæsar of Russia). In the Treaty of Kaynarji the Empress Catherine II. is addressed as "Vé Pādishāhi." Napoleon I. in 1805 received a letter from Sultan Mahmūd II., in which he was described as "Imperathor vé Pādishāhi." The term is now generally used in letters to European sovereigns, but never, I believe, to the English or Italian monarchs. In a recent letter to Leo XIII. (1892) His Holiness was styled Pādishāh.

As a matter of fact, Sultan Selim I. was the first Sultan who ever had the satisfaction of having his name mentioned in public prayer as Khaliph, in the Great Mosque of Zaccarias, when he visited Aleppo in 1590.

That the Sultan, although he is the sole earthly representative of the Prophet, possesses no priestly attribute, possibly accounts for the facility with which he can be deposed, and even murdered, without unchaining the religious passions of his subjects. It is, however, taken for granted that he cannot be dethroned, or done away with, without the formal, and

The title of Wezeer, Vizier, or Vizir dates back to the year 132 of the Hegira (A.D. 750), and first came into prominence under the first Abassides Khaliph. It is of Arabic origin, and means literally *porter* or *bearer*, the Vizir being the *bearer of the Sultan's burdens*, for nothing should be done in State affairs without his authority, confirmed, of course, by that of the Sultan.

The decrees of the Sultan are called respectively, "Hattī Sherīf" (illustrious writing), "Hattī Humayūn" (august writing), or simply "Hāt" (writing). The seal of the Sultan (often a marvel of caligraphy) is termed "Tughra." A single line of the Sultan's writing is styled "Mudjibindje 'amel oluna" (let it be done in consequence). The Sultans also take the title of Ghāzi, or "victorious;" thus—Abd-ul-Hamid Ghāzi Khān.

There were two contemporary lines of Khaliphs in the Peninsula, at Cordova and Grenada—the first beginning with Abd-ul-Rāhman, A.D. 755, and ending in 1225, on the fall of Cordova into the hands of the Spaniards, with Abu 'Ali. The second opened in 1238 with Mohammed, and ended with the unfortunate Abdu'llāh-as-Zaggāl, popularly known as Boabdil el Cecho (the unlucky), in 1492.

The Shi'ah series of Khaliphs ended with the twelfth in descent from Ali, and, with the exception of Sultan Mahmūd Abdu'llāh, 1306, no Persian monarch has ever claimed the rank of Khaliph.

even the written authority of the Sheikh-ul-Islām. The Sultan has certain privileges, peculiar to his office rather than to his personality. For instance, he alone may lay his hand upon the Amānāt or sacred relics, such as the standard of the Prophet, his beard and teeth, and other relics of Mahomet and his companions, which are preserved at the Seraglio, and he is, moreover, the only Mohammedan in whose presence women may unveil. He can enter any hareem unbidden and behold its fair inmates without let or hindrance. But it is contrary to etiquette for him to avail himself of this agreeable privilege. The Sultan can also nominate and depose the Sheikh-ul-Islām.

On the other hand, his supreme authority is not so generally accepted as is currently imagined. Many Mohammedan sects, such as the Persian Shi'ah, barely recognise him as the veriest figure-head of Islām, if at all.

I may here recall that, in the early part of his reign, Abd-ul-Hamid II., realising his altered circumstances, conceived the bold idea of strengthening his spiritual position by an endeavour to rally the whole Mohammedan world, from Stambul to the Himalaya, under his sacred sceptre, and inaugurated a movement known as Pan-Islāmism. He accordingly invited a host of austere and zealous Sheikhs to his capital, and, assembling them at Yildiz, propounded his scheme. They were to use their utmost endeavours to revive religious fervour at home, and, further, they were to turn their efforts to the con-

version of the negroes in the Western and Eastern Soudan, and other parts of Africa, and enroll them under the banner of the Prophet, and of his Vicar, the supreme Khaliph of Stambul. The Sheikhs received the proposal with enthusiasm, but the undertaking was not crowned with any ultimate success. True, the negroes of Senegambia and the Soudan received the green-turbaned missionaries with profound respect —they were, it has been hinted, well paid for their pains—but the Sultans of Morocco and Zanzibar proved refractory, and even insulted the Khaliph's envoys. They absolutely refused to share their authority with Abd-ul-Hamid II., and the Panislāmic movement ended in a *fiasco* which cost the Turkish Government enormous sums of money and considerable loss of *prestige*.

Before proceeding farther, it may be well to examine briefly the doctrines and ritual of Islām. Nothing can be simpler than its dogmas. They may roughly be reduced to two, evidently derived from Hebrew and Christian sources: "Say not," says the Koran, "that there is a Trinity in God; He is One undivided, and rules alone in heaven and on earth. God has no Son, He is eternal, and His Empire is shared by none." To this purely Deistic doctrine may be added a second, which concerns eternal reward and punishment. "The wicked," says the Koran, "will descend into the flames of hell, and the just shall enjoy eternal happiness." So far, so good; but unfortunately Mahomet grafted on to these certain other theories, drawn from more ancient religious

systems and philosophies, and also from a superficial, possibly a mere hearsay, acquaintance with the Gospels, especially the Apocryphal Gospels.* Among the doctrines which he thus resolved into dogmas are predestination, fatalism, and polygamy, a trio which has proved fatal to the intellectual advancement of the Mohammedan world. By circumscribing his religion within the narrow limits of the Koran, and by declaring that book infallible in every word and line, Mahomet crushed for ever all spirit of inquiry and freedom of thought.

Tenets so simple call for a simple ritual. Mahomet, rightly dreading the idolatry so prevalent in Mecca in his day, wisely ordained that the interior of the mosques, or places of prayer, should be destitute of all representation of human or animal life. The early mosques were plainly whitewashed, and were not even ornamented by inscriptions from the Koran. In the course of time certain pious Khaliphs expended vast sums on the construction of mosques, and many of them became monuments of architectural magnificence, into which the richest materials were introduced. But the interiors, however splendidly adorned with marble

* The account of Christ in the Koran is taken nearly word for word from the Apocryphal Gospels, even to the story of the turning of the clay bird into a living songster. See the Apocryphal Gospels of "Mary" and of the "Infancy," and of "Barnabas." This latter was used in compiling the Koranic version of the life of Jesus. As an instance of Mahomet's ephemeral knowledge of the Gospels, in his account of the Virgin he confuses her with Miriam of the Old Testament by describing her as the daughter of Imrān and sister of Aaron.

columns, stained-glass windows, and glorious carpets, are as bare as an English town-hall denuded of its proper complement of chairs and tables. The only furniture of a mosque is the Mihrāb, a sort of niche indicating the direction in which Mecca lies, and before which the Imām takes his station when reading prayers, and the Mimbār, or pulpit. In some of the Imperial mosques there is a Māafil-i-Humayūn, or private pew for the Sultan, and a little gallery, called a Māafil, for the chanters. Two gigantic wax candles, set in candlesticks of gold, silver, or brass, stand on either side of the Mihrāb, but these are only lighted during Ramazān.* Most of the mosques are now embellished with elaborate inscriptions, in Arabic or Turkish characters, quoting verses from the Koran. In some of them, notably those at Brusa, there is a fountain, or tank, under the central dome. This does not always serve, however, for ablutions, but simply as an ornament.

The popular idea that people are obliged, as a sign of respect, to take off their shoes before entering a mosque is incorrect. This is done simply because the floors of the mosques are covered either with mats or carpets, which must needs be kept scrupulously

* Usually and popularly misspelt *Ramādan*—the ninth month of the Mohammedan year, observed as a strict fast from dawn to sunset. The Koran commands fasting and prayers during the month, but makes no mention of the nocturnal festivities. In the Traditions, however, the Prophet undoubtedly granted permission to the Faithful to spend the night in lawful recreation and feasting, so as to relax the rigours of the fast.

clean, as during their devotions the Faithful touch them perpetually with their foreheads. If you wear goloshes or overshoes, you have only to remove them, and boldly walk into the mosque in your boots. Another popular error connected with the mosques is the belief that, according to the Koran, Christians must not be allowed to enter them. This is absolutely opposed to the teaching of the Koran, which declares that any man or woman may enter a mosque, be their religion what it may. Indeed, in the earlier period of the history of Islām, it was considered that to invite them to attend the services was an excellent method of converting unbelievers. A century ago, or even less, it was exceedingly difficult for a Christian, whatever his rank, to enter a mosque in Constantinople. Miss Pardoe avers that she herself was the first Englishwoman who ever attended a Ramazān service, and she did so disguised as a youth. At the present time there is only one mosque in Constantinople which a Giaour may not inspect, the Mosque of Eyub. At Brusa the mosques are as free of access as the churches in Rome or Naples. I learn that tourists are now permitted to visit the interesting Mosque of Omār at Jerusalem, which in old days it was dangerous even to approach.

Since Turkey and the East generally have become the happy hunting-ground of tourists, the Imāms have conceived the idea of charging the Giaour for permission to enter the mosques, and thus turning an honest penny and replacing, in part, the loss caused

by the recent confiscation of much of their property. There are, of course, in various parts of the Empire, a few mosques which are held so sacred, on account of the relics they contain, that the mere presence of a Giaour even in their vicinity would, in the estimation of the Faithful, be pollution. Prayers are said in every mosque five times a day. The Friday afternoon service is a little more elaborate than those which take place on other days, and is not unfrequently expanded by a sermon, delivered without any gesture whatsoever, lest the attention of the congregation should be distracted from the matter of the discourse by the manner of its delivery. There are no vestments and no special lights, except in Ramazān, when the mosques are brilliantly illuminated at nightfall with thousands of lanterns, greatly increasing the effect of the striking scene, so often described by travellers.

Islām is a faith which has been but slightly modified since its foundation, and neither Sultan, as I have already stated, nor Sheikh-ul-Islām is called upon to confirm new dogmas and ceremonies, or to concern himself with the creation or dispersal of religious orders. Their duty is to preserve the *status quo* in ecclesiastical matters, and to keep alive the fervour, not to say fanaticism, of the Faithful throughout the Empire.

The Mohammedan population of the Turkish Empire has been very aptly compared to an immense religious confraternity; it is, in fact, a vast military guild or brotherhood, bound to obey the commands of

its supreme chiefs, the Sheikh-ul-Islām and the Sultan. Every Turk ought, in a certain sense, to be a priest and a warrior. Remembering this fact, we can readily understand the ease with which the spirit of fanaticism is roused in those portions of the Empire where the Turks are in the majority, and the ferocity with which an otherwise docile and somewhat indifferent-natured people will behave under the influence of what I may call religious intoxication.

The Sheikh-ul-Islām acquaints his Imperial master with any case, in the Islāmic priesthood, of sanctity to be rewarded, or of evil conduct to be punished, and the Sultan metes out the appropriate sentence. Although the Sultan can depose the Sheikh-ul-Islām at his own sweet will, the consent of that dignitary must be obtained before the Pādishāh himself can be removed from his high estate. Thus, when Midhat Pasha conspired against the unhappy Abd-ul-Aziz, his first care was to obtain a written sanction of the Sultan's deposition from the then Sheikh-ul-Islām, Hassan Hairullah. Without that sanction the troops would have revolted, and the plot must have failed.

Even as it is a fashion to consider the Sultan a sort of Pope, so I have heard many people, even old residents in Constantinople, describe the Sheikh-ul-Islām—literally, the Chief or Ancient of Islām—as "the Archbishop of Canterbury of the Mohammedan religion." Although this functionary is treated, and spoken of, with extreme respect, like the Sultan, his august master, he has no pontifical attributes whatever. The Sheikh-ul-Islām is the supreme interpreter of the

Koran, first Magistrate of the Empire, Privy Seal, Minister for Education, etc., and he alone can appoint or remove the officials attached to the various tribunals throughout the Empire. He has, moreover, absolute control over the Imāms, Mollahs, Ulemās, Softas, and Kaims, and over the Superiors of the various Medrassés or theological colleges and other judicial and religious institutions. The Dervishes, who correspond to the regular clergy of the Catholic and Orthodox Church, are also, though indirectly, under his rule. Twice every week he sits at the Supreme Court of Justice, or Arzodessi, which is attached to his palace, and his decisions are absolutely irrevocable.

In ordinary life the Sheikh-ul-Islām wears the old-fashioned Turkish costume, a dark *caftan*, or cloak, lined with fur, and a green turban wound round a fez. On State occasions, however, such as the Kurban Baïram, or Feast, which follows Ramazān, his robes are of white cashmere, edged with gold, and his mantle light green, also heavily fringed with gold. His palace is not far from Yildiz Kiosk, and he comes to the Selāmlick in a splendid modern carriage and pair, in time to receive the Sultan at the foot of the stairs leading to the little Hamidieh Mosque. His rank is so exalted that he can marry into the Imperial family, and he almost always has four wives. He receives a State visit once a year—on the 26th day of Ramazān —from the Grand Vizir, and returns the compliment on the following day. The civil list allotted to him exceeds £15,000 per annum.

In the early days of Mohammedanism prayers

were said publicly by the Prophet and his immediate disciples, none of whom claimed sacerdotal rank, nor even exceptional learning—Mahomet calls himself "the ignorant Prophet"—which would indeed have been absurd, for the ritual is so simple that anybody can easily perform it. But very shortly after the death of Mahomet, abuses crept in, and it became absolutely necessary to keep the mosques from becoming bear gardens, in which the first man from the street might start chanting prayers—in opposition, possibly, to some other devout person, equally eager to display his piety or his vocal powers. It was decided, therefore, that public prayers should be said and intoned only by a properly qualified member of the congregation. The selection rests entirely with the frequenters of any particular mosque—the parishioners, as we should call them—who choose the person they consider most worthy of the honour. This individual, irrespective of sex, is called an Imām,* or Mollah. Within the last two centuries he has been obliged to pass a sort of examination as to the quality of his voice, the respectability of his appearance, and his reputation for orthodoxy and integrity, but otherwise he has no special priestly functions, although he performs marriages, blesses the rite of circumcision, and reads the first prayers over the dead. These duties do not

* The word Imām means one who leads, or heads. Thus: Imām-ul-Muslemin, the Chief of the Faithful, one of the Sultan's titles. In certain mosques largely attended by women, some elderly matron not unfrequently leads the prayers, and thereby virtually becomes a she Imām.

prevent him from keeping a shop or engaging in any official or commercial business he chooses. As a rule, he has his shop or office as near as possible to the mosque where his services as reader are engaged. He adds to his income by teaching the Koran and the rudiments of education to the children who frequent the mosques for that purpose, and whose parents pay him a few piastres a week for his trouble. The Imāms are bound by no vows, and can abandon their religious duties whenever they choose. They may be distinguished from the rest of the population of Stambul by the modification of the old Turkish costume, which they have specially adopted. Over shabby, ready-made German trousers, with which they replace the picturesque lower garments of the ordinary Turk, they wear a flowing *caftan*, or coat, lined with fur, and a small turban is twisted round the fez.

The Imāms have not much spiritual influence, but they are of some social importance, being the collectors and disseminators of half the gossip and scandal in the town. Like the priests of other religions, they are great match-makers, and their shops are sure of custom, especially in the early morning hours, when flocks of veiled women come to consult them on their domestic affairs. They are also said to show great ability in arranging divorces. The Imāms receive a small salary out of the funds of the mosques to which they are attached, and I have been assured they pick up a good deal at weddings and funerals. The rich among them usually give whatever money they receive

for their sacred offices to the poor; their position naturally brings them into contact with all sorts and conditions of men and women, but they are not treated with marked outward respect by the people. Some few are fairly well educated, but the vast majority are very ignorant. Unfortunately, they are fond of turning a *dis*honest penny, by selling fine old Persian tiles and other curiosities, which they pilfer from the mosques, to passing tourists. Some years ago, Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid enacted a Draconian law against these acts of vandalism, and not a few Imāms and Mollahs—notably those connected with St. Sophia—have seen the unpleasant side of a Turkish prison in consequence.

I made the acquaintance of several Mollahs during my recent visit to the East. There was one good gentleman attached to the Ahmedieh Mosque who was considered the ablest caligraphist in Stambul, and some specimens of his work in my possession are certainly marvels of penmanship. I thought it my duty, as he had been most obliging to me, to invite him to visit me at the Hotel Bristol in Pera, and one fine afternoon he accordingly arrived. As an instance of the peculiarly uninquiring state of the average Mohammedan mind, I may mention that Mollah Ibrāhim Effendi, although he is considerably over fifty, had only crossed the bridge between Stambul and Galata five times in his life! The Hotel Bristol, before the opening of the Pera Palace Hotel, boasted the only lift in Constantinople. So enchanted was my Mollah with going up and down, propelled by invisible means, that to satisfy him, and to give him a

sort of treat in return for his many acts of politeness, I paid the lift man to take him up and down no less than twelve times. He clapped his hands in perfect ecstasy, laughed till he cried, and again and again invoked Allah and His Prophet to witness, that never, no never, had there been on this earth such a charming invention as a lift! A week or so later he sent me a box of dates, and a marvellous specimen of his penmanship, together with his blessing and a letter in Turkish assuring me of his undying friendship.

When I state that there are no less than 600 mosques, big and little, in Stambul and its environs, and that there are never less than half-a-dozen Imāms attached to each of these, some idea may be reached of the formidable proportions of the holy army of Mollahs. This army may be divided roughly into two great classes: those who pass their examination and are admitted to the magistracy, termed Ulemās, and the Imāms, or inferior and comparatively illiterate clergy, who confine themselves to attendance in the mosques. The title Mollah appertains in strictness to the Ulemā class only; but it is generally applied, throughout the Turkish Empire, to all persons who may officiate in mosques. But the reader must understand that the Imām may be a man of no education, while the Mollah, properly so called, must pass certain severe tests before he is admitted to the corps of Ulemās—whereof more anon.

Next in importance to the Imām is the Mu'azzin, or prayer-crier. Five times a day he has to ascend to the upper balcony, or bracelet, of the minaret attached to his mosque, and cry, or rather chant, in a loud

quavering voice, with prolonged cadences, and repeating each sentence twice over, "Allāhu Akbar! (four times repeated). Ashadu an lā ilāha illa'llah (twice repeated). Ashandu anna Mohammadan rasùlullah! (twice repeated). Hayya 'ala 's-salāti (twice). Hayya 'Ala'l-falāh (twice). Allāhu Akbar (twice)." "God is most great. Great One, I confess there is no God but God, I avow Mahomet to be His Prophet. Come to prayer. Come to salvation. Save our souls. God is great! There is but one God, the only God!" The Mu'azzin also takes part in the service, as a sort of sub-deacon, and chants the responses. These worthies are usually selected for the beauty and strength of their voices, and are carefully trained by the Mollahs in the traditional methods of chanting the call to prayer. Those attached to the Imperial mosques, and especially those belonging to St. Sophia, are considered by the Turks as great artists, and they certainly execute their interminable nasal cadences with wonderful precision. The reputation of these Mu'azzins is not exactly one of sanctity, and they are regarded by the populace as very sad dogs indeed. Many a Turkish folk-song turns on the loose conduct of the Mu'azzin, and he plays a conspicuous rôle in the very questionable exhibitions of Karagheuz, of whom I shall give some account in a later chapter of this work.

Khatibs, or preachers, are attached to most of the larger mosques, and receive fairly large salaries, according to their popularity. The greater number of these sacred orators, however, pick up a living by going from mosque to mosque, and getting engage-

ments to preach on certain specified days. Some of the more popular imitate the Catholic monks, and go on preaching tours from one end of the Empire to the other. A few of them, I believe, enjoy great celebrity, and when they are announced to preach in any mosque, the sacred edifice is crowded to excess.

The Moakits, or clock-winders, form yet another section of this sort of lay clergy. All the mosques and turbhés are full of clocks, most of them made in France and England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, notably by one Prior, of Ludgate Hill (1750 to 1770). Some of these old clocks belonging to the mosques and palaces at Constantinople can occasionally be picked up in the Bazaar. They are magnificent specimens of buhl, and have evidently been presented to the mosques by wealthy persons; the figures are always in Turkish hieroglyphs, but the name of the manufacturer is distinct enough. I dare say some of my English readers will wonder what earthly connection exists between clocks and divine worship. They must remember that the prescribed prayers of the Mohammedan ritual must take place five times a day, at stated intervals, regulated by the moon. This necessitates certain astronomical studies, which are determined by the clock-winders, and thus the clocks and their attendants are as essential to this peculiar system of divine worship, as are the minarets and the Mu'azzins. You are sure to find, close to the larger mosques, the Moakitkhane, or clock-shop, the owner of which is equally certain to be a Moakit.

All the mosques swarm with little boys, who run errands, fetch water, and make themselves generally agreeable to the Imāms and other officials. These young people are also pretty sure to be attached to the neighbouring baths, and, young as they are, their reputation is not pleasing. The lowest order of official connected with the mosque is the Kaim, who perform the menial offices, which are, however, ennobled in the eyes of the Faithful, in that they are rendered unto God.

Finally, the Turbhé-bachi, or tomb-keeper, who literally lives amongst the tombs which cluster round the mosques, keeps them clean, and prays incessantly for the peace of those who sleep within them.

There is yet a second great division of Mohammedan clergy, the judicial body, or Ulemās. The Koran, like our Bible, deals with all the various relationships of life, religious and civil. It is the Mohammedan guide in all the details of existence; but it is a lamentably incomplete guide, full of contradictions, and it frequently goes so far as to quote rules and regulations which it neglects to explain. The number of Mohammedans who can read and write is, needless to say, exceedingly limited; therefore, at a very early stage of the history of this religion, the body of Ulemās—learned men, not only versed in the contents of the Koran, but also capable of explaining the omissions I have alluded to—came into existence. Those of the Faithful who were at a loss to understand a text were in the habit of going to the Ulemās for an explanation. This was

especially the case in Baghdad, that magnificent centre of Mohammedan life, which rose on the banks of the Tigris not far from the ruins of Nineveh, during the splendid period of the Abassidian dynasty. The Ulemās formed a large section of that learned community. Their decisions in difficult cases of dispute gave them by degrees so great an influence that before long their *status* had to be defined, and they were set aside to be not only interpreters of Islām, but its judges in matters temporal as well as spiritual.

Turkish justice is about the most marvellous farce imaginable, and its complications are quite beyond the belief of those who have not investigated the matter closely. No Mohammedan can be judged within the Turkish Empire by any Christian. He is subject to the law of the Koran, or Cherat, alone, and, although there exists a tribunal for mixed cases, based on the model of the French law-courts, the Mohammedan, even if he be condemned by the judge who presides over these loosely-conducted courts, is pretty safe to get his sentence rescinded on appealing to the purely Turkish authority in the person of the Sheikh-ul-Islām.

The Ulemās may best be described as sacred lawyers, who interpret the law according to the Koran. They have to go through a severe course of study, and to pass examinations in grammar, syntax, logic, rhetoric, metaphysics, geometry, astronomy, jurisprudence, and theology, after which they become Kadis, or Justices of the Peace. They rank much higher than the Imāms, who, after all, have merely

to parrot the prescribed prayers. They have, moreover, a distinct hierarchy, defined by Sultan Suleymān the Magnificent, and modified by Mahmūd II., the Reformer. Thus, the Mollahs of Mecca and Medina take precedence of those of Adrianople, Brusa, and Damascus; on the other hand, the Mollahs of Galata, Scutari, Eyub, Smyrna, Aleppo, Larissa, and Salonica compose the inferior class of magistrates of the first order. Originally they held their offices for life. In the seventeenth century a decree was passed limiting their tenure to one year.

They are almost a caste, and hold together with amazing *esprit de corps*. Their Sheikh, or Chief, of course, is the Sheikh-ul-Islām, but they have three other important superiors, known as Kadi-ul-Asker, one of whom is supreme judge for Turkey in Europe, the second for the Asiatic provinces, and the third for Stambul proper. This latter is further distinguished as "Istambul Effendesi." These three functionaries, whose duty is to revise the sentences of all the judges of the Empire, who reside in the capital, and attend twice a week at the court of the Sheikh-ul-Islām, are the only ones who are invested at the Palace by the Grand Vizir. They are permitted to sit on the left-hand side of the divan at his Seraï, or Palace; and they may, moreover, assume the title of *Nakib-ul-eshrāf*, which carries with it absolute jurisdiction over the Ameers and all descendants of the Prophet. This high dignity gives them precedence over all the great men of the Empire, except the Sheikh-ul-Islām and the Grand Vizir, and they therefore kiss the

scarf which hangs on the Sultan's right arm at the great sunrise reception of the Baïram, immediately in succession to those two eminent dignitaries. They have the same rank and precedence as Vizirs and Ministers; and their decisions, once they receive the endorsement of the Sheikh-ul-Islām, cannot be rescinded.

The Mufti, or Kadi, correspond to our Justices of the Peace. Under them are the local Mapshati, or Naïb, who refer all exceptional cases to the Mufti, and he in turn may, when in doubt, send a matter on to Constantinople for the approbation of the Kadi-ul-Asker.

Nobody who has not lived in Turkey can have any idea of the incredible confusion which exists in the judicial system of the country, owing to the fact, already mentioned, that the Turks, as true believers, are subject to the Koranic law only, whereas residents of other nationalities appeal for justice to their respective Patriarchs, Embassies, or Consuls. Every nation has its own law-court and prison, only brought into use, of course, when the defendant and prosecutor are of the same nationality. The Greeks and Armenians, when they get into trouble, are judged by their Patriarchs, or at the Galata Seraï police-court, or at the law-courts near St. Sophia. The consequence is that cases drag on from court to court, from Embassy to Embassy, and from Patriarch to Patriarch, until the litigants are utterly ruined. The Stambul law-courts are among the funniest and quaintest sights in this strangest of strange cities.

You enter, say, the Galata Seraï, through a vast dirty hall, at the end of which is a staircase; here you will find two filthy porters, who pounce upon your feet and carry off your goloshes, giving you a check in return. Looking about, you behold a perfect mountain of dirty goloshes, of all sorts and sizes, no one wearing them being allowed to ascend the staircase. At the top of the wooden stairs you find yourself in a long corridor, packed with witnesses—beggars, Turkish ladies closely veiled, foreign demireps, eunuchs, dusty soldiers, Catholic monks, Greek priests, Armenians, dragomans, Germans, Englishmen, some in native costumes, some in an unsightly garb of compromise, and some in appalling second-hand suits of dittos. The judge, the lawyers, and the jury usually struggle in about two hours after their appointed time. They are immediately served with coffee and cigars. When these are consumed, business begins in earnest. The court fills, the noise becomes deafening. "Silence!" roars the judge—whereupon the Zapthé, or policemen, collar half-a-dozen persons who have been perfectly silent and well-behaved, and drag them screaming from the court. When order is re-established, the witnesses begin to make their declarations, and as they belong to every country under the sun, each is supplied with a dragoman, or interpreter, who usually interprets, so I am assured, according to the amount of backsheesh he receives. When a prisoner is sentenced, the Zapthé seize hold of him and hustle and kick him downstairs, until they reach the door leading into the courtyard of the

prison. When this is opened the unfortunate wretch is shoved in, the door is slammed behind him, and the Zapthé have a good laugh over their exploit, which probably has cost their victim a broken limb, and certainly has given him excruciating pain. Outside the court is a café, where, for a small consideration, you can hire false witnesses, to swear anything you tell them. To say that there are no upright judges in Stambul would be unjust, but one of the ablest of these gentlemen assured me that it was quite impossible for him to do his duty under existing circumstances.

After this digression, let me return to the clergy of Islām. The Softas, literally those "who burn for knowledge," concerning whose exploits we have heard so much of late, are the theological students who desire to become Ulemās. All the larger mosques have Medrassés, or schools of theology, attached to them, attended by these lads, mostly from the provinces, who receive a gratuitous education of a purely theological character. The Medrassés supply each Softa, or student, with a small room, scantily furnished, two loaves of bread daily, and a certain quantity of firewood in winter. The youth must obtain the other necessaries of life at his own cost. Bad nourishment, want of proper exercise, and, above all, of any healthy female influence—the lads being absolutely excluded from all communication with respectable women—gives these Softas a certain unhealthy, sodden appearance, far from reassuring. They are very closely watched by the police lest they should affiliate themselves to some

political secret society or other, and His Majesty has more than once sent a number of them home, not a few, they say, to the bottom of the sea. Their course of studies consists of the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish languages, which take a good dozen years to master thoroughly, Turkish caligraphy, which is amazingly difficult, astronomy, mathematics, and, of course, philosophy and theology. Formerly they used to learn astrology, but that occult science is now only practised, in the metropolis at least, in the strictest secrecy.

The Dervishes, as I have already remarked, occupy an analogous position in the Mussulman world to that of the regular clergy in the Latin and Orthodox communities.

They derive their popular name of Derwish, or Dervish, from the Persian. The syllable *Der* is the same as the English word "door," and has the same signification. *Vish* is probably from the Persian verb *Vinten*, to beg.

Some authorities, however, declare that the two syllables have a totally different meaning, and that the word Dervish should be interpreted as "sill of the door," others as "those who beg from door to door," or "a poor fellow who goes from door to door seeking assistance." This is evidently the meaning accepted all over the East, wherever this class of Dervish is known, though in those countries where the Arabic language is spoken they are called Fakeers.

At a very early period of Mohammedanism Persia became the classic land of Dervishism, probably because its people are instinctively inclined to mysticism,

and believe, moreover, as good Shiites should, in the advent of a mysterious Imām who shall suddenly appear to impart new life and a new dispensation to Islām. Here the mystics soon mustered a formidable army, and are still exceedingly numerous. They never seem to have been deep theologians, but to have preferred to carry on strange and morbid practices, in which the abstract contemplation of Allah and His saints not unfrequently degenerated into eroticism. If my readers wish to form any idea of the extravagances to which thousands, nay millions, of Persian Dervishes have been addicted, they will do well to consult Hammer's "History of the Order of the Assassins," an evident perversion of the word *haschehachin*. Here will be found a fine translation of an Invocation to Divine Love, which surpasses in sensualism even the famous hymn to Venus by Lucretius. The Persian Dervishes obtained such a hold on the popular imagination that in the tenth century of the Hegira (1501 A.D.), one of their body, Shah Ismaïl Sefewi, managed to dethrone the then reigning Shah, and to get himself elected Khaliph in his stead. He founded a dynasty known in history as that of the Sūfīs, from *suf*, or wool—the woollen garment of the Dervish. The Ottoman Sultans, dreading a like unpleasant incident for themselves, never encouraged Dervishism, and even frequently and severely persecuted the various orders. When Suleymān I. increased the dignity and influence of the Sheikh-ul-Islām, and of the Ulemās, the prodigious power hitherto wielded by the Dervishes received a staggering blow.

And when, in 1328, the second Sultan of the Othmān line, Orkhān, created the Janissaries, and fused them with the order of Bektāshee Dervishes, then just formed by Hadji Bektāsh—thus instituting a sort of religious soldiery, with the qualities and faults of each order—the Ulemās forthwith began their secret work of dissolution, never losing an opportunity of shaking the Dervish influence, against which, from that day to this, they have waged ceaseless war. Turkish literature is full of droll stories invented or inspired by the Ulemās, turning the Dervishes into ridicule, and accusing them of the worst possible forms of vice. But for all that, the populace has always loved the Dervish, just as, even in their most revolutionary moments, the lower orders in Catholic countries have ever had a tenderness for the friars. Their influence, even now, is exceedingly great, and it behoves the Sultan to reckon with it.

Khaliph Ali was the Father of the Dervish movement—the first Mohammedan to voluntarily renounce the world; not exactly as a penitent, but because he thought he would thereby more perfectly realise the famous maxim of the Koran: "The best of men is he who makes himself useful to his fellow-creatures." His example was soon followed by a number of other Mussulmans, who formed an association, of which Ali was made chief. These holy men, originally, were called Sūfishābi, indicating their purity of life, and its conformity with the moral code of the Koran. Little by little, however, these Dervishes abandoned the original idea of serving suffering

humanity, and, imitating the hermits of India and Greece, they substituted for the practice of active benevolence, a purely contemplative and ecstatic existence, which very soon degenerated into eccentricity. They even fell away from orthodoxy; and not a few of them went so far as to declare that the true interpretation of the Koran was independent of the Prophet, and that the holy book was open to the free investigation of the Faithful.

The Maulawī-jalālu'd-dīn, who founded the order of Dancing Dervishes, was undoubtedly not a mystic only, but a pantheist. His idea of the future life is admirably expressed in the following lines: "You say the sea and its waves; but in so saying you do not mean two different things, for the sea, in its rising and falling, makes waves, and the waves, when they have fallen, return to the sea. So it is with men, who are the waves of God; they are absorbed after death into Him." Very soon these Dervishes were deemed heretics, and it was only after considerable persecution that the majority of them returned to the orthodox fold.

The original Sūfi, it must be allowed, made up for their laxity of doctrine by the austerity of their lives. By degrees, however, in their endeavour to emancipate themselves from all earthly things, they actually became more sensual than their less pretentious fellows. Abstracting themselves entirely from society, they gave themselves up to most pernicious and fanatical practices; flagellations, hysterical forms of prayer, and so forth, ending in catalepsy and all

sorts of morbid diseases. When the reaction set in they plunged into the most revolting orgies, and made up for their previous austerity in a manner too abominable to describe. An enormous number of these Mohammedan hermits took up their abode in Egypt, where they actually inhabited the very cells in the Thebian Desert which had been abandoned by the Christian mystics of the first centuries. On the Bithynian Olympus, the reputed abode of the classic gods, whose rugged peaks are snow-capped always, even in summer—like those Greek monks who, now as then, worship and fast on the heights of Athos—some thousand enthusiasts pitched their camp, and indulged in strange religious rites, and in a mystic contemplation of Allah. A few yet linger there, and are called by the people Santons, or Saints.

The early Sūfi did not assume any political importance, and it was not until the second century after Mahomet, that a Sheikh of the Sūfi of great sanctity founded the first well-defined religious order. His scheme was opposed with fury by the Mollahs, who, appealing to the Prophet's well-known dictum, "There must be no monasticism in Islām," sought by every means, fair and foul, to uproot the sapling which, as they conceived, must surely, sooner or later, grow into a poisonous tree; but their efforts were all in vain.

The Dervishes, it should in fairness be remarked, are no more priests than the Imāms or Ulemās. They are bound by no vows of celibacy, or even of poverty, although, not very many generations back,

an order did exist, called Turlaki, or Durmistars, who bound themselves by vows as rigorous as those of the Catholic Trappists. They never partook of meat, or even fish, but lived entirely on herbs, and held women in holy horror, a fact which did not, however, prevent their having such an abominable reputation, that early in the last century they were nearly exterminated. A few, however, of these extraordinary creatures still exist, and only three years ago one of them was still to be seen, wandering stark naked about the streets of Constantinople. He was held in such veneration, that, in the low quarters of the city, men and women would rush out to touch and embrace him in the most repulsive manner. I saw him once, but he was arrested shortly afterwards, at the request of the Ambassadors, and placed in some charitable institution. Old residents in Constantinople assured me that in their youth there were a great many of these half-crazed creatures, popularly known as Abdàls, to be seen. They are even now frequently to be met with on the country high-roads, and in the provincial towns, and are always treated by the natives with scrupulous respect, and even with awe.

I append a list of the twelve principal original orders of Dervishes:

1. The Rufâ'ee—Howling Dervishes.
2. The Sa'dee.
3. The Suhraverdee.
4. The Shibânee.
5. The Mevlevee—Dancing Dervishes.
6. The Kâdiree.

7. The Nakshibendee.
8. The Vaisee (which latter, they say, are *anti-Mohammedan*).
9. The Jelvettee.
10. The Khalvettee.
11. The Bedawee.
12. The Dussookee.

It is difficult to find out any reason for the different forms of costume prescribed by the founders of the various orders of Dervishes. Some wear caps of peculiar shape made of gauze or skins, cut with gores or sections, called *terk*—a word which signifies abandon. These sections vary in number in the different orders. For instance, whilst the Bektāshees wear five or seven *terks*, the Nakshibendees have eighteen. Some of these caps are covered with Arabic inscriptions, mostly verses from the Koran, embroidered with gold. The colour of the caps and gowns varies, but, so far as I have been able to ascertain, these are a mere matter of caprice, and have no mystical meaning whatever, except the pale green, which is the colour of the Prophet himself.

It is, however, perfectly true that the lower orders consider the garments of certain Dervishes, who are distinguished for their holiness, as having miraculous powers, and they are not unfrequently seen, especially in the provinces, rushing forward in the streets to touch or kiss the hem of a Dervish's mantle or skirt, or even his feet.

If you see a Dervish with a turban folded round his cap, you may be sure he is a Sheikh—the Chief or Master of a *tekkieh*, or convent.

The Rufâ'ees prefer black to any other colour, and their Sheikh's turban is black, but his official costume is crimson. They perform their *yikir*, or "call upon the name of Allah," standing. Their hall of worship, or chapel, is called the *scrheedkhaneh*. The Mevlevees wear a tall white or yellowish cap, without any *terks* or turban, but their Sheikh wears a green turban, because he is usually selected from the Sayyids, or descendants of the Prophet.*

The Kâdirees wear four embroidered *terks* in their caps. If not a Sayyids, their Sheikh's cap is invariably pure white. At their worship they move round the hall standing upright, their hands placed on the shoulders of their neighbours.

The Bedawees have twelve *terks* in their caps, the colour being red. They perform their religious exercises almost exactly in the same fashion as the Rufâ'ees.

The Khalvettees have no *terks* in their *kulah*, or cap. It is, however, divided into four angles; the colour is white, yellow, green, or other. These Dervishes pray standing upright.

Without entering into particulars of the costumes of the numerous other Dervishes, I will pass on to

* Regarding the tall felt *kulah*, or cap, of the Mevlevees, it is stated that, before the world was created as an abode for man, another one existed, known as the "Alem i Ervâh," or spirit-world. A soul is supposed to be a *Noor*, or light, without bodily substance, and consequently invisible to the mirror-like eyes of humanity. During the previous state, the soul of Mahomet is said to have existed, and to have been placed by the Creator in a vase, also of light, of the form of the present cap of the Mevlevees.

the Bektāshees, who have four and twelve *terks*—white and green. They have no special form of prayer or of position. They chant their prayers by calling the Iklāhs, or invocations, a thousand and one times, each man bringing upon the scene a hundred and one pebbles, and as each recites an Iklāh he drops one into the circle until all the invocations are recited. I believe there are a hundred and ten different orders of Dervishes scattered up and down the East, each bearing the name of a special founder. It would, however, be uninteresting, as well as confusing, to enter into the particulars of even a tenth of them; a goodly number, moreover, have disappeared, if not entirely, at all events from the larger and more civilised cities.

The Dervishes believe implicitly in the Santons, or saints, or spiritually superior men, and in angelic beings. In the Koran, what we should call "saints" are designated as "the friends of God," who "fear nothing." They are, we are assured, subject to no affliction, because they entertain the true faith, and have lived consistently with it, in exact obedience to God, from whom they receive reward both in this life and in the next. In life they have been favoured with spiritual visions, and apparitions, and, like the Prophet himself, have had frequent intercourse with angelic visitors. Adam is included, as well as Christ, among the saints of Islām, who are to be loved and respected, and invoked by true believers very much in the same manner as the Christian saints are invoked by the faithful in the Greek and Latin

Churches. Their tombs are places of pilgrimage, before which lamps are burnt, and where prayers are offered with greater fervour than elsewhere. Mosques have been erected over the graves of most of the celebrated saints; and over those of lesser note, as a rule, small square isolated buildings, crowned with a cupola, have been built, and in many cases the *Turbhé*, or mausoleums, within are covered with more or less splendidly embroidered shawls and handkerchiefs. In olden times, the turban worn in life was affixed to the head of the coffin. Relics of the departed are suspended against the walls—their walking-sticks, their rosaries and beads, and even portions of their garments. These are touched and kissed with reverence by the pilgrims; and I remember on one occasion, in the mausoleum of Murād II. at Brusa, I was invited to walk nine times through the enormous rosary of that illustrious Sultan, the Mollah who showed me over the building assuring me, in fairly good Spanish, that the proceeding would bring me great luck.

The tombs of some Mohammedan saints—that of Eyub, at Constantinople, for instance—are held to be so sacred that the eye of the Giaour must never be allowed to rest upon them. It is lawful to ask these saints to pray for the dead; and, should the dead person have already passed into bliss, the prayers offered on his behalf can be passed on to another suffering soul. In this practice it is easy to discern the influence of the doctrine of purgatory upon the Mohammedans.

It would be an error, however, to imagine that the Saints of Islām are only those who have been translated to a better world. All over the East there are holy men whose reputation is sufficiently wide to secure them a great following of devout persons, who come to visit them, to entreat their prayers, and even to rub articles of clothing, beads, etc., against their persons. Not a few of these holy people sit absolutely motionless for hours and hours, just as if they were made of stone. Others are constantly on the march, from village to village, collecting alms and performing miracles.

One day I became aware of a great hubbub in the High Street of Brusa; people were running about like mad; women rushed out of the houses with their children in their arms, and everybody seemed in a state of wild excitement. I asked what was the matter. "A Saint has come," replied my dragoman, and we hurried out to see the holy man. If appearance has anything to do with age, this man must have seen the fall of Jerusalem and been an old one then. I have never seen anybody so ancient-looking; he was like a walking mummy, fantastically decked out with beads and bits of talc. But as he passed the throng ran forward to touch him, and even to put their fingers in the marks of his footsteps in the dust.

The Dervishes are exceedingly charitable, and are bound to assist one another in all cases of emergency. Many of them, however, are so poor that they live entirely on alms, which are never refused.

Nothing prettier can be imagined than the service of the Turning Dervishes. Their orchestra consists

of a band of about eight musicians, each playing upon some peculiar and very ancient-looking instrument, such as a tabour, a tambourine, a dulcimer, a small mandoline, a one-stringed violin, and a little Egyptian harp. Although it is absolutely against the rule of the Koran for musical instruments to be employed in divine service, the Dervishes have always managed to use them.

Foreigners, who are not Mussulmans, are admitted as spectators into many of the *tekkiehs* of the Turning Dervishes, either in a particular part of the gallery or in a small apartment on a level with the hall. In the latter they are expected to stand upright during the performance, and to leave their over-shoes or shoes outside the door in charge of a man, stationed there for that purpose, and to whom a trifle is handed on departing. They are not, however, admitted until after the conclusion of the Islām Namâz, or special opening prayer.

The Sheikh's apartment is called the Sheikh Hujreh, and the large hall of the *tekkieh* the Semâ Khâneh, *i.e.*, the hall or house where the brethren hear celestial sounds, and enter into a state of ecstatic devotion.

The Mevlevees have also another apartment called the Ismi Jeleel Hujreh, where they perform their ordinary morning and evening Namâz, or prayers; also the Ismi Jeleel ("the beautiful name of Allah"). This chamber is not to be found in any other *tekkieh*. The performance described is always during the third daily prayer, called in Turkish the Eekindee, and commences about ten o'clock p.m.

A properly constructed Mevlevee *tekkieh* should have eighteen chambers, and the vows also always number eighteen. Each occupant receives eighteen piastres per diem. The Mureed, or novice, must serve in the kitchens of the convent for one thousand and one days, and his room is then called the Chillâh Hudjrehsee, or "Cell of Retirement," wherein the neophyte is supposed to be under probation, and much occupied in prayer and fasting. The only officers in each community are the Sheikh, perhaps a Nâib Khaleeieh, or deputy, and one brother, who superintends the expenses of the convent, called the Khâzzeenchdar. The office of Sheikh is hereditary, but, as with all the other orders in Turkey, it requires the confirmation of the Sheikh-ul-Islām.

In the hall, or chapel of these Dervishes, is a circular platform erected in the middle of the building, which is kept highly polished—to enable the sacred dancers the better to execute their pious gyrations—and which is surrounded by a balustrade. A thickly-latticed gallery on the right is devoted in the capital to the women of the Imperial Hareem, or in the provinces to the ladies of the upper classes. The general public, including strangers, women of the humbler class, and children, stand or squat round the circular platform. Immediately over the principal entrance is a balcony, occupied by the musicians.

The extraordinary ceremony which gives its name to the Dancing, or, as they should be more appropriately called, the Turning Dervishes, is not without its meaning. The community first pray for their past

sins, and the amendment of their future lives; and then, after a silent supplication for strength to work the change, they figure, by their peculiar movements, their anxiety to "shake the dust from their feet," and to cast from them all worldly ties.

As I could not reconcile myself to believe that this custom could have grown out of mere whim, I took some pains to ascertain its significance, and so visited the chapel or *tekkieh* several times, to ascertain whether the ceremonies altered on different days, but I remarked no change.

After passing, with a solemn reverence, twice repeated, before the Sheikh, who remains standing, the Dervishes spread their arms, and commence the revolving motion; the palm of the right hand being held upwards, and that of the left turned down. The underdress displayed, when they doff their cloaks, consists of a jacket and petticoat of dark-coloured cloth descending to the feet; the chief members of the community are in white or green, and the others in brown, or a sort of yellowish gray; about their waists they wear white girdles edged with red. Their petticoats are of immense width, and laid in large accordion plaits beneath the girdle, giving a mushroom-like appearance as the wearers swing round.

The number of those who were "on duty" (I know not how else to express it), the last time I watched them, was nine—seven men, and the remaining two mere boys. Nine, eleven, and thirteen are the mystic numbers, which, however great the strength of the community, are never exceeded, and

the remaining members of the brotherhood, during the evolutions of their companions, continue engaged in prayer within the enclosure. The beat of the drum in the gallery marked the time to which the revolving Dervishes moved, and the effect was singular to a degree that baffles description. So true and unerring were their motions, that, although the space they occupied was somewhat circumscribed, they never once gained upon each other, and for five minutes they continued twirling round and round, as though impelled by machinery, their pale, passionless countenances perfectly unmoved, their heads slightly inclined towards the right shoulder, and the rapid whirl of their inflated garments creating a cold, sharp draught in the chapel. At the termination of that period, the name of the Prophet occurred in the chant, which had sounded intermittingly in the gallery, and as they simultaneously paused, and, folding their hands upon their breasts, bent down in reverence at the sound, their ample garments wound about them at the sudden check, making them look for all the world like mummies.

An interval of prayer followed, the same ceremony was performed three times, and at the termination of the third they all fell prostrate. Then those who had hitherto remained spectators flung their cloaks over them, and he who knelt on the left of the Sheikh rose, and, with a rapid and solemn voice, delivered a long prayer divided into sections, prolonging the last word of each sentence by the utterance of "Ya hu, ya hu," with a rich depth of octave that would not have disgraced Edouard de Reszke.

This prayer is for "the great ones of the earth" —the magnates of the land—all who are "in authority over them"; and at each name all bowed their heads upon their breasts, until that of the Sultan was mentioned, when they once more fell flat upon the ground, howling dismally. Then they rose to their feet, bowed to each other, and disappeared.

If the ceremonies of the Turning Dervishes are graceful and inoffensive, those of the Howling Dervishes, though exceedingly interesting, are repulsive to a degree. The first person to begin the office is the Sheikh, who wears a vivid crimson robe, and squats down in front of the Mihrāb, on either side of which burn two small braziers, occasionally fed with incense. Then the musicians assemble, and sit in a circle; and at the other end of the room, against a wall, a number of members of the congregation and Dervishes arrange themselves in a row. Then the ceremonies commence. The musicians bang away on the cymbals and tambourines, and begin to cry out as loud as they can: "Allah Akbar! Ya Allah, ya hu!" The devotees lolling up against the wall also begin to roar in cadence and rhythm, beating the measure with their feet, and swaying their bodies to and fro. Louder and louder they cry, until their excitement rises to literal frenzy. The eyes seem to start out of their heads, they foam at the mouth, and in about an hour after the exercises are begun several of them tumble on to the floor, rolling in epileptic fits. When the excitement is at its height, several mad men and women are brought in and laid gently before the

Sheikh, who tramples on them very lightly with his feet. On one occasion I saw a poor woman, evidently a dangerous lunatic, catch hold of the Sheikh's legs, and almost pull him down. She was removed with great difficulty, by no less than four men. Meanwhile the howling continued, more deafening than ever. Little children were brought in, and laid down to receive the pressure of the holy feet. A spruce young officer prostrated himself, and was similarly treated. By this time, the Dervishes at the upper end of the room had lost all control of themselves, the cymbals twanged and crashed, the tambourines and drums were banged with tremendous force, and the whole frantic congregation was screaming as if possessed, "Ya Allah, ya hu!" A more diabolic or outlandish exhibition I never beheld; but I am assured it was trifling compared with what takes place in the less modernised cities of the interior.*

On a lovely May day, after a lunch at Robert College, which can boast one of the most beautiful views in the world, my attention was directed by Dr. Washburn, the learned Principal, to a neat-looking villa situated on the heights above the Bosphorus, and the ruins of the castle of Mohammed II. This

* In former times, there used to hang, on the walls of all the *tekkieh* of the Rufâ'ees in Constantinople, a collection of sharp spikes, knives, and pokers, which at given moments were heated red-hot and distributed among the Dervishes, who immediately began to bite them, run them through their cheeks, and stab themselves with these fiery instruments of torture. This is now prohibited, but still takes place in the secret gatherings of these fanatics, and in the more remote cities of the interior.

building is the *tekkieh* of the Bektāshee Dervishes, the most influential and enlightened of all the orders. Half an hour afterwards I stood in front of their abode. A pleasant-looking old Turkish gentleman was seated before the door, smoking a chibouck. I saluted him, and he, in reply, offered me a cup of coffee, and begged me to be seated. He turned out to be D. Pasha, one of the Chiefs of the order, and a good French scholar. From what he told me, and from what I afterwards found out for myself, the order of Bektāshee was, it seems, founded by Hadji-Bektāshee-Veli, who retired, early in the eleventh century, to a cave on Mount Olympus, where he lived and died in the odour of sanctity. The commencement of the order was exceedingly humble, but it readily grew in importance until it overshadowed all the rest. For many centuries it was composed exclusively of military men, and was exceedingly orthodox. The Dervishes who are mentioned in history as accompanying the Turkish army, and who took such a prominent part in the Siege of Constantinople, were undoubtedly Bektāshee. But early in the eighteenth century, a certain Fāzil Bey visited Paris, and formed the acquaintance of Voltaire and the other philosophers of the period. On his return to Turkey, after many years' absence, he reformed the order, and introduced into it certain advanced theories, which were distinctly heretical. Whilst recognising the existence of the Supreme Being, the Bektāshee say no prayers whatever, and the speeches made at their meetings are of a purely philosophic,

literary, political, and scientific character. They are even said to be affiliated to some of the French Masonic Lodges. One thing is certain; the order now consists almost exclusively of gentlemen of education, belonging to the Liberal, or Young Turkey party. Hence, as may be imagined, the Bektāshee are not smiled upon by the Sultan, but he has never been able to suppress them. They have survived the Janissaries, of which body they at one time formed a part. At the present moment they are not numerous, but they are, undoubtedly, very influential, on account of the high character and education of their principal members. They have now no *tekkieh* in Constantinople proper, and the one at Rumelli-Hissar is constantly watched by the police, and by Palace spies. In connection with this order of Dervishes, I may relate a comical anecdote of Sultan Mahmūd II.

Rival orders endeavoured to induce this Sultan to suppress the Bektāshee, which, in truth, he was not at all reluctant to do. His Majesty, however, determined to put the unpopular brethren to a test. He accordingly gave a great banquet, to which he invited all the principal Dervishes in Constantinople. What was the surprise of his guests to find that each was supplied with a spoon having a handle a couple of yards long! How on earth were they to eat their pilaf? They looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders, and wondered what it could mean. "Come, come," cries the Sultan from his throne at the upper end of the room, "why do you not eat your pilaf?" The dismayed looks of

the Dervishes plainly indicated the puzzled condition of their minds. Suddenly, to the intense amusement of the Commander of the Faithful, and of the company in general, the Bektāshee began to feed each other mutually, across the table, with their giant spoons. "Well done!" cried the Pādishāh, clapping his hands with delight, "you are indeed progressive and sensible men, O Bektāshee, and I shall not suppress your order to please these idiots, who are so dull of comprehension!"

It is remarkable that historians, and even modern diplomats, have bestowed so little attention on this very influential order of Dervishes, which has played, and still plays, so prominent a part in the revolutionary movement in Turkey.

The Bektāshee chapel is perfectly plain, ornamented with a single inscription only—the name of Allah, in Arabic characters—over the divan of the Superior of the community.

Each order of Dervishes has what, at Rome, would be called its General or Supreme Chief. This influential position is hereditary, not elective. In the case of the family to which this honour belongs becoming extinct, the community elects a new Sheikh, whose descendants form a fresh dynasty. Each *tekkieh* has its minor Sheikh, who is dependent on the Superior of his order. None of these Superiors or Generals of orders have any particular position at Court, excepting the Sheikh of the Mevlevee or Turning Dervishes, who ranks next to the Sheikh-ul-Islām, and is called *Mollar-hunkiar*, or sovereign priest.

He invests the new Sultan with the sword of Othmān in the sacred mosque of Eyub, a ceremony which corresponds with our coronation. The members of each community are obliged to obey their Superior implicitly, in all matters concerning their religious duties. Each Sheikh has a council or chapter of superior, or initiated, Dervishes (called *dédés*, or fathers), who administer the affairs of the order, and transmit its traditions and secrets from generation to generation. They have also the right to punish or reward members of the community. Their chief is known as the Aktchi-Dédé, or Father Cook. I dare say my readers will wonder what on earth a cook has to do with it, but with a nomadic people like the Turks, the cook, in olden times, occupied an exceptional position. The chief of the Janissaries rejoiced in the title of Supreme Cook, and the banner of that all-powerful order was the soup-kettle.

The Dervish novices are called Muribs. They begin their duties at a very early age, and are not admitted as full members of the community until they have served at least six years. The various Dervishes have certain secret passwords and signs by which they can know each other in all parts of the Empire. A great number of those belonging to the upper classes only assume the peculiar Dervish costume, consisting of an ample cloak, of some dark soft woollen stuff, and a high conical hat, or cap, of the same material, when they are indoors. I was never more surprised than when, visiting a Pasha whose acquaintance I had made when he was wearing

a very smart modern military uniform, I found him dressed in the Dervish habit.

An excellent account of the curious habits of the Dervishes will be found in Professor Vambéry's very remarkable and amusing book, "The Travels of a False Dervish." I remember, one evening, after dinner at the British Embassy, this accomplished author related many of his strange and inedited experiences, and among them one which sent us into fits of laughter. He had not long been started in his Dervish disguise, when he discovered that he had omitted one most important detail: he had not included certain objectionable insects which infest the persons of the genuine wandering Dervishes, and whose presence they do not seem to mind. Fearing lest his disguise should be penetrated because he was minus a colony of these unpleasant companions, he took good care to supply himself with a sufficient number to ensure his safety, and he added, with a quaint smile, "At first they were very uncomfortable, but, by degrees, I quite learned to like them; and I consider their gentle form of bleeding perfectly hygienic. When I returned to civilisation I was so sorry to part with them!"

The most serious charge which can be brought against the Dervishes is the zeal with which they have constantly fostered superstitions of all sorts among the lower orders, in order to increase their own influence over them. Undoubtedly, education has largely erased superstitious ideas from the minds of many, especially among the upper classes in the

East, and the value of amulets, talismans, and charms has considerably diminished; but a little observation soon shows how closely superstitious practices of all kinds are interwoven with the life of the entire population. There is scarcely a domestic animal but has an amulet attached to it, to avert the influence of the evil eye. Over the doors of the wealthy, even on some of the finest palaces and konaks, writings are suspended, containing some verse from the Koran, intended to divert the attention of the evil one. Not unfrequently at the angle of some important edifice you may perceive an old shoe and a bunch of garlic tied up together. The use of an old horseshoe is as general in Constantinople as it is in London.

Few people realise how prevailing is the inherited habit, among all classes of Englishmen, of hanging up a horseshoe somewhere or other in the house. Our ancestors did it to keep out the devil; at the present moment it is supposed to be "for luck!" Amulets of all sorts, containing verses from the Koran, and invocations to sainted Mohammedans, are worn with the same object, by men, women, and children, in Constantinople. Extraordinary powers are ascribed to a class of talisman which is entirely mystical and cabalistic in its origin, and is drawn up according to what is called the Ibmvifd, or science of calculation—the science of setting out figures in mystical order. All the letters of the Arabic alphabet have a numerical value: "v" is five, "x" ten, and so on, as in our own, and it is therefore easy to draw up a prayer, or an invocation, in figures.

There is also a popular belief that every letter of the alphabet has a servant, or angel, appointed by Allah to attend upon it, who can be invoked in case of need. Certain inscriptions placed over doors are supposed to be attended, night and day, by a host of mysterious beings, who, with a view, it may be, of finding some variety of occupation, guard the fortunate possessors of the house from every harm. Unless these inscriptions are drawn up on certain days, and at specified hours, during certain phases of the moon, or under given positions of the stars, their value entirely disappears.

People who love you well will give you a charm—a pebble engraved with the name of some celebrated saint, or the founder of some Dervish order. The stone itself is usually taken from a particularly sacred mosque, or Turbhé. The possession of these charms are believed to be the objects of perpetual warfare between the Djins, or Genii—the good and the evil fighting constantly for the ultimate possession of the human spirit.

The Dervishes generally carry a number of these engraved stones in their pockets. They present them to the more devout among their clients, to young men about to join the army, or start on a journey, and even to some husband who desires his wife may be blessed with strong and intelligent offspring.

Fortune-tellers may be seen squatting, all day long, on the pavement of every city throughout Asia Minor, predicting future events by means of pebbles, bits of glass, stones, and all kinds of rubbish. Each object

is held to have a particular meaning, and the combination of these will often produce a startling effect upon the inquirer, who squats opposite the sage (male or female), watching, with that intensity peculiar to the Oriental, and listening with eagerness to the fateful words which set forth his destiny.

The gypsies, for the most part, tell fortunes by the hand and by cards; but I am assured that the Mohammedans have no faith in this method of looking into the future, and that their *clientèle* is almost entirely Christian or Jewish. Still, I have had the pleasure of having my fortune told by means of cards, by a Turkish lady, in the Turkish fashion, and I am bound to admit that certain of her predictions came literally true.

In the lower quarters of Constantinople, you will frequently see, seated in shop-windows, singular-looking figures robed in gray, with green turbans on their heads. In those same shop-windows you will invariably notice the outline of a large hand, roughly traced on paper. It represents the hand of the Prophet, and the gentleman in the green turban is a diviner. If you understand Turkish, or have a faithful dragoman who will not exaggerate or travesty the diviner's words, he will, for a small consideration, tell you your fortune, by the lines in your hand, or by some cabalistic calculation, or by means of four cups, in the first three of which he will put small quantities of water, earth, and fire, while the fourth stands empty, save for the air of heaven, the fourth element. I am told that, in their inner chamber, these excellent

people pretend to raise the dead, and hold spiritualistic séances of a nature to startle even the followers of Madame Blavatsky. A gentleman who has long lived in Constantinople, went, now many years ago, to consult one of these creatures. He was shown into an inner room, at the back of the house, wherein almost total darkness reigned. Suddenly, after a great many prayers, the spirit of what looked like a black demon arose. It seemed to float higher and higher—its eyes glowing with supernatural light—till the dim form apparently touched the ceiling. From time to time, however, it emitted certain sounds which roused my friend's suspicions. He presently struck a match, and, to his immense amusement, beheld a large black cat, tied to a pole, and draped in a long shawl, so that only its head was visible. Around its eyes the ingenious trickster had rubbed phosphorus with an unsparing finger!*

In the streets of Constantinople, and throughout the East, strange-looking individuals, some of them negroes, make occasional appearances, dressed in rags, but wearing a tiger or leopard skin over their shoulders, and bearing a long stick called *keshkool* in their hands. They are not always Dervishes, many are simple *fakeers*, men who prefer remaining poor and miserable,

* These details as to the practice of occult arts may be held somewhat out of place in a chapter devoted to an account of the Sultan and his priests; but the superstition of the Turkish populace may so reasonably be ascribed to the influence of the Dervishes, as before hinted, that the digression is not, I believe, altogether inappropriate. The same may, in a measure, apply to the remarks on Hasseesh which close this chapter.

to devoting themselves to an honest calling. They wander something after the fashion of the palmers of the Middle Ages, from holy tomb to holy tomb, in fulfilment of some vow, and spend most of their time in prayer and meditation. Sometimes they travel as far into Europe as Pesth, where they visit in a little mosque—the only one which has survived the time of the Turkish occupation—the tomb of a saint called Gulba. Fifty years ago these Dervishes—if so they may be called—were extremely common; and, as I have said elsewhere, I have seen one of them meandering about in a state of absolute nudity.

In Vercelio's work on Constantinople, published in the early part of the sixteenth century, there are several pictures of a certain order known as Kalenderees,* or men who carry about with them a crooked horn. This order still exists, and is really a branch of the Bektāshee, although it is generally disowned by the more cultured members of that community. In olden times the Kalenderees used to go about half-naked, and often with a large snake twined about their bodies. Women who desired to bear children would rush forth from their houses to greet these uncanny creatures, and even kiss them, in spite of their loathsome appearance.

The Hasseesh habit is common among the Dervishes, but the Turks of the lower and middle class do not frequent the Hasseesh dens, and when they indulge in the drug they do so in their own houses.

The use of Hasseesh is far more universal in

* The title *Kalender* means pure gold, indicating purity of heart and body.

Constantinople, and the rest of the Empire, than most people would believe. The Government under the present Sultan has done a great deal to prevent the spread of this terrible intoxicant, and its sale is prohibited. Still, there can be no doubt that it is used on an enormous scale, and that it accounts for a good deal that would otherwise be incomprehensible to the ordinary traveller. The use of narcotics, tobacco, and opium, although they appear to belong entirely to modern times, would, I think, be found, on close investigation, to be of greater antiquity than is usually believed. Amongst the ancients, for instance, there is very little doubt of their existence, though possibly they were sacred to the priests, and only used by the initiated. We have all heard of certain temples in Cyprus and Syria whither votaries flocked from all parts of the world in order to have their wishes gratified. We have minute descriptions of the peculiar manner in which they were initiated into the mysteries of the temple. After being bathed, and dressed in splendid robes, they were, we are assured, given some peculiar food, after which they inhaled a delicious odour and rested upon a flower-covered couch. There in all probability they fell asleep, and the brain being roused into unnatural activity by the narcotic previously inhaled, they awoke with the firm conviction that their desire had, for a time at all events, been gratified.

I believe the learned in such matters are of opinion that Hasseesh was not originally intended as a stimulant, but merely as a spiritual soporific, producing that profound quietude of will and mind which the Orientals

so dearly love, and which, throughout all the Moslim world, is known by the name of Kaif.

But by degrees the insinuating qualities of the narcotic made themselves felt, and the power it possesses of producing extravagant visions, and even delirium, of an erotic character, soon rendered it a formidable weapon in the hands of the leaders of religion, for, by enabling them to make their followers realise the joys of another world, it secured them their implicit faith and obedience in this one.

Unfortunately, the effects of Hasseesh are even more dangerous than those of opium. I have been assured by several physicians in Constantinople, who have studied the question very closely, that whilst it enfeebles the mind in the space of a very few months, it has no effect whatever upon the body. Thus the victim of the vice may live for many years, in a state of absolute imbecility; whereas the opium-eater soon passes away, utterly exhausted by the effects of his favourite drug.

Hasseesh, which, like opium, is a product of the poppy plant, is of Egyptian or Assyrian origin. It is known in Constantinople by the name of *Esrar*—a secret product or preparation. It is energetically cultivated all over the Ottoman dominions, but thrives best, and most abundantly, in the provinces of Asia Minor, and especially at Nicomedia, at Brusa, and in Mesopotamia, near Mosul. The leaf, as well as the flower or head of the poppy, is used in the preparation of Hasseesh. The leaves are taken into a shed, where they are carefully picked over and laid out

to dry on a long coarse carpet made of wool. When they are sufficiently dry they are gathered together. The best leaves are then beaten until they are reduced to dust. This first product is immediately collected, and forms the choicer portion of the Esrar. The fibrous leaves remaining are then reduced to powder and made into a sort of paste of an inferior quality. The best Hasseesh costs about forty francs per kilogramme, the second quality is not worth more than ten. This second quality is the most dangerous, as it contains a greater proportion of the narcotic. Esrar is sold, in Constantinople, either in the form of a syrup, or in pastilles to be smoked with a tonbeki, a vessel placed in the narghili, or water pipe. The syrup, of which I have taken a few drops mixed with water, has a nasty taste, but even the small quantity I swallowed sent me to sleep in less than ten minutes. Very little of it suffices to cause the ecstatic delirium, and visions of the joys of Paradise, or other scenes, which the person partaking of the drug particularly desires to conjure up.

Though, as I have stated, it is to be bought in Constantinople, in the Egyptian Bazaar, it is not sold openly; but it is very easily obtained, and there are various dens in existence whither both men and women repair for the purpose of eating the drug, and in which incredible orgies take place. There are one or two such places in Stambul itself, and two years ago, at any rate, a notorious den existed in Galata, at the back of a certain Turkish bath. Here the votaries of Venus assembled, and, after certain extraordinary

orgies, withdrew to a room hung with silk curtains, where the drug was distributed to them by a mysterious-looking female veiled from head to foot in black gauze. This woman was said to be a Mohammedan, but I do not believe it. She was in all probability of Armenian or Greek nationality.

During the first month of my stay in Constantinople one of these dens was raided by the police with very curious results; and, if I am not mistaken, a terrible murder which took place in Constantinople this spring (1896), occurred in the house of a certain priestess of Venus, who included a Hasseesh den amongst the attractions of her temple. Establishments of this sort were, by the way, very frequent in old Byzantium, and the great Christian preachers, from St. John Chrysostom downwards, denounced them hotly, as dangerous to soul and body alike. Those which still exist in various parts of Stambul are doubtless a kind of traditional imitation of the mysterious chambers wherein erstwhile dallied the more idle and vicious denizens of the ancient city.

Although the Mohammedan religion has no consecrated priesthood, it is as richly endowed with this world's goods as was the Church in England before the Reformation. All lands, goods, and chattels dedicated to God and His worship, as well as to the benefit of the poor and of humanity in general, are described by the followers of Islām as wakf, or wakuf, literally, a thing conceded or abandoned to the service of Allah. There are three kinds of wakuf: the first comprising the estate and goods of the mosques,

the proceeds of which must be devoted to their service and preservation; the second maintains the schools and charitable societies annexed to the mosques; and the third supports the "servants of the mosques" and the clergy—greater and lesser. D'Ohsson gives an ample and very detailed account of the manner in which the vast property of the Mohammedan Church should be subdivided for the benefit of the Divine Service and of the needy poor. Nothing could be more satisfactory than the theory, nothing less so than the practice; for, like everything else in the Ottoman Empire, the wakuf are in a deplorable condition, and an additional source of ruin. The ecclesiastical property in landed estate of the Turkish Empire is so large, that it might easily be reckoned at considerably over a third of the entire country; but by far the larger portion is out of cultivation, and there is scarcely a mosque to be found in a proper state of repair.

Sancta Sophia, which is as rich as was St. Peter's, is not properly cared for; its courtyards are weed-grown, and its clergy, who should be very wealthy, are very badly off, in many instances dependent on visitors for backsheesh. When this glorious edifice was recently damaged by an earthquake, its restoration had to be carried out by the Sultan, notwithstanding the fact that it is, or, rather, should be, one of the richest places of worship in the world. The simple truth is, that its wealth is badly administered, its lands ill cultivated, and its house property unlet, because in many instances its administrators have not

had the sense to keep it in proper repair. Millions of acres of forest land, sufficient to supply Europe with the finest timber, belong to the mosques; but this, instead of benefiting any one, is a standing danger, because the woods are constantly being set on fire by charcoal-burners and banditti.

If a man dies and leaves no immediate issue, the mosque nearest to his place of decease takes possession of his property, even to the detriment of his grandchildren, who, if they wish to keep the said property, have to pay the mosque something like ninety per cent. interest for the privilege. Then, again, the whole population, Mohammedan and Christian alike, have to pay a tithe, a goodly portion of which goes into the pocket of the Provincial Governor and other officials before it reaches the treasury in Constantinople. The wakuf is not one of the curses of Turkey only, but also of Egypt, and it only recently formed the subject of a very interesting article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The writer pointed out how the system had impoverished Egypt, thanks to the ignorance and incapacity of the Mollahs, and others, whose duty it should be to administer the ecclesiastical property in their hands, for the benefit not only of themselves and their mosques, but of the suffering poor. Fanaticism and prejudice have hitherto repelled most attempts at reform in this direction, and possibly will continue to do so for generations to come. A proper and systematic method of disposing of the vast property of Islām without detriment to Divine worshippers and to the poor—

proportionately but little benefited by it at present—would indeed prove a blessing to Ottoman and Christian alike. The present state of affairs is intolerable. It causes much misery, and tracts of the most valuable land in the world are being allowed to go to waste. Many of the greatest Turkish statesmen, such as Köprili, Rāghib, Āali and Fuad Pashas, have proposed schemes of reform, but without much result; and even a practical confiscation, or a proposal for a more equitable and sensible method of administration, has only resulted in rousing suspicion and exciting fanaticism.

CHAPTER III.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF REFORM IN TURKEY.

I.

UNTIL the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the political and social condition of the Turks, as a people, remained what it had been ever since they embraced Mohammedanism. Scarcely a change had been made, even in the slightest detail, in what the nation had accepted as the most perfect code ever bestowed directly by God on man. But, as the conquering Ottoman approached nearer Europe, the more intelligent among their leaders began to perceive that their systems of government and of ethics were not as faultless as they had hitherto imagined, and Sultan Orkhān, who had called the formidable Corps of Janissaries into existence, and who had established the seat of Government at Brusa, signified more than once, both by word and deed, during his remarkable reign, that certain reforms were indispensable, and made a strong attempt to convert his new capital into a seat of Science and Art, a sort of second Baghdad. For about fifty years, indeed, the beautifully situated city on the slope of the Bithynian

The political condition of the Turks before the Conquest.

Olympus was a centre whither men of learning, mostly Arabians or Greeks, eagerly flocked, so that the fame of its schools spread rapidly throughout the Oriental world. Nevertheless, these earlier reforms were but ephemeral, and the restless, nomadic spirit, and insatiable love of conquest, which has always distinguished the Ottomans, soon obliterated all trace of intellectual life. Thus when, in due time, an enormous army, impelled by the fanaticism of the Dervishes, found itself under the leadership of Mohammed II., *el-Fatih*, before the walls of Constantinople, there can be no question as to the low status of intellectual condition among the Turks. Fearless warriors, men of ardent faith—the vast majority could neither read nor write, and were ready to believe any wild story they were told. "The Turks," writes a Genoese Crusader in the thirteenth century, "are essentially a warlike people — *popolo guerriero* — accustomed to rough living in tents. They are brave, honest, and truthful; but fanatical in religion, and fearfully cruel and vindictive," and so they remain.

The day which saw the Crescent* usurp the place of the Cross on the dome of Sancta Sophia, was not altogether a lucky one for the Ottomans. They found, in Constantinople, heaped up treasures of artistic

* The figure of the crescent is the Turkish symbol, and hence it has been regarded by Europeans as the special emblem of the Mohammedan religion, although it is unknown to the Mohammedans of the East. It was adopted by the Turks for the first time upon the overthrow of the Byzantine Empire by Mohammed II., and is now generally used by them as the insignia of their creed. The Byzantine flag was a crescent on a red ground.

magnificence, and a civilisation of extremest luxury, verging on effeminacy, notwithstanding the irreparable ruin which had befallen the city two hundred years before, at the hands of the fourth Crusaders. These rough-and-ready Turkish warriors, hitherto so hardy and austere, found to their hand hundreds of empty palaces, and thousands of deserted houses—palaces to them—which they speedily adapted to their own purposes. The softening influence of luxury soon made itself felt, and, in a generation or so, the Ottomans had yielded to it, unresistingly. The entry into Stambul.

At noon on that fatal day in May,* 1453, Mohammed, followed by his Vizirs, rode triumphantly into Sancta Sophia, right up to the high altar, where he tarried long, in wondering admiration of the surpassing splendour of the most sumptuous of all the Christian churches. Moved by some sudden and fanatical impulse, a soldier—so runs the legend—cast his iron gauntlet against one of the finest mosaics in the church, and shattered it to fragments. In an instant his head rolled at the Sultan's feet. The Conqueror presently ordered the prodigious treasures of gold, silver, and jewels, which decorated the innumerable shrines and Icons in the Cathedral, to be carried to his tents. Two whole days and nights were spent in pulling them down. The booty was enormous, and the women of the Sultan's Hareem, and such of his Pashas' wives as had followed the camp, now bedecked themselves with jewels which

* This siege so gloriously and so accurately described by Gibbon began April 6, 1453.

had shone in the crowns of the Virgin, and of the innumerable Saints, whose shrines had so lately adorned the devastated fane. Shorn of its sacred furniture and symbols, the church was straightway converted into a mosque.

From Sancta Sophia the Sultan rode through the deserted streets—deserted, at least, by their Christian inhabitants, who shrank like scared rats into their holes—to the Palace of the Blachernœ, on the land wall—the last residence of the Greek Emperors. When he beheld its desolation, he is said to have muttered a distich from a Persian poem, apposite to the surrounding scene of vanished grandeur, recalling how the spider may weave its web in erstwhile kingly halls, and how the bee oft hums in the decaying gardens of deserted royal homes. Whether or not he really sat reciting poetry to himself, is a matter of small importance, compared with the fact that, within a very few days, he set to work, with wonderful intelligence, to reorganise the State and Government of his newly-acquired capital and territory. The massacre on both sides, Christian and Mohammedan, had been terrible, the siege long and cruel. Thousands had died of sickness, and a still greater number by the sword. Something like 100,000 men, women, and children were almost immediately sold into slavery, and sent away to the furthest confines of the Empire. Meanwhile, the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus were black with boats, conveying fugitives to the Greek islands. In less than a fortnight, the city lost about two-thirds of its inhabitants, and it has never

recovered its full population—a fact readily proved, when we consider that, at the time of the siege, Constantinople extended from the Sea of Marmara nearly up to the land walls, and that now fully one-third of that space is waste, and very scantily populated.

Perceiving the impossibility, in view of the comparatively small numbers of his own followers likely to settle in the city, of totally eradicating the ancient Christian civilisation, so firmly rooted there (which he would fain have accomplished), Sultan Mohammed suddenly rescinded his edicts for the expulsion of the Christian population, and did all in his power to induce the fugitives to return. He issued an iradé inviting, even bribing, the Greeks to re-enter the city, and went so far as to allot them a quarter, which they retain to this day, and which is known as the Phanar, from an ancient lighthouse which, at a very early period, used to jut out into the Golden Horn. He flattered them by promises of freedom of worship, and forthwith ordered their priests to assemble, and elect a new Patriarch, in lieu of the one who had fled to Mount Athos.* He, moreover, condescended to crown this dignitary with his own hand, and presented him, as a symbol of temporal power, with a sceptre studded with diamonds. He next escorted him, in state, to the gates of a palace which he had given the Orthodox Church, to be the Patriarchal residence for ever, and granted him privileges, greater than any which had been enjoyed by his predecessors, under the Byzantine

Mohammed II. grants privileges to the Christians.

* It is usually stated that the Patriarch was killed in St. Sophia. He really fled to Mount Athos, where he died in 1460.

Emperors; for, in addition to the full exercise of his spiritual authority, he was to consider himself the supreme temporal ruler of the Greek population, not in Constantinople only, but throughout the Empire, the other Archbishops and Bishops being subject to him. The Sultan gave him a body of Janissaries to wait upon him, and protect him in case of danger. He annexed a Court of Justice to his Palace, and handed his Beatitude the keys of a well-appointed torture chamber, and of a correspondingly awe-inspiring prison. In a word, Mohammed II. established an almost independent rule, of an essentially theocratical character, within his own government. In so doing, he only acted up to his principles, for, as Khaliph, he was himself a spiritual as well as a temporal ruler, and his own government was essentially theocratic.

Should an independent history of the Greek Patriarchate of the Phanar ever be written, it will contain evidences of the existence, in the East, from the fifteenth century to our time, of a spiritual autocracy, supplemented by a temporal power, beside which the Papal claims in the West will seem to pale. Even at this moment, the Greek Patriarch of the Phanar holds the life and death of his subjects in his hands,* the vast modification in his present position, as a temporal ruler, being rather the result of circumstances,

* A hundred years ago the Patriarch could, without any form of trial, and for the simplest offence, order a man to be hanged. Several of the Patriarchs in bygone times were men of by no means edifying character, and the prison of the Patriarchate was often packed with innocent victims of their greed or vengeance.

than that of any actual abrogation of his privileges. The independence of Greece, and the subsequent establishment of diplomatic relations between that kingdom and the Porte, are doubtless more responsible than anything else, for the actual diminution of this authority, which is still very respectable—and even formidably autocratic.

In order still further to remedy the great decrease in the general population, consequent on the siege, and, possibly, with a view to preventing a Greek predominance, Mohammed, some five years after the Conquest, summoned from Asia Minor some thirty thousand Armenians, to whom he allotted a quarter of the city which, in remote times, had belonged to the Venetians, but which was henceforth to be known as Kum-Kapu —or the Sand-gate—where to this day the Armenians chiefly reside. He granted them privileges, identical with those accorded to the Greeks, and he gave them funds, wherewith to build themselves a Patriarchal Palace, and a prison. The Latins, on the other hand, according to ancient Capitulations, were placed more or less under the protection of their Embassies, or other official representatives, who frequently were ecclesiastics. Galata was in the hands of the Genoese, and the Venetian colony had its Embassy, and its national Church of St. Mark, immediately in front of the Burnt Column—in the very heart of Stambul.

Privileges to the Armenians and Catholics.

The peculiar position of the two great Italian colonies enabled them, more or less, to protect the Roman Catholics of all nationalities. As to the Jews, who were not numerous at the time of the Conquest,

they were relegated to a few streets, on the site of which rose, in the seventeenth century, the Yeni Valideh Djami. Later in the century, an influx of Jews, driven out of Spain by the Inquisition, was established at Balat, a quarter near the old Blachernœ Palace.* The Sultan had dealt with them in much the same manner as with the Christians, and had placed them under their chief Rabbi, or Kat Kham Bachi, to whom he granted judicial privileges, which neither he nor his successors in office have ever, I think, been able fully to exercise. Having thus settled the conditions of his non-Mohammedan subjects, the Sultan —whose military genius was really not dazzlingly brilliant, his conquests being not so much due to his own warlike capacity as to the formidable strength and resisting power of his army, but who was distinctly a sagacious and energetic statesman—set to work to organise his own Government and Court, on lines worthy of the magnificence of the city which was henceforth to become, not only the capital of the Turkish Empire, but of the Islāmic world—the Rome of Mohammedanism.

Although devastated, and partly ruined, by the two successive disasters which had befallen it—the siege by the Latin Crusaders in the twelfth century, and the recent invasion of the Turks—Constantinople was still

* In the sixteenth century some 30,000 Jews, driven out of Spain by Philip II., took refuge in Constantinople, and so greatly increased the Jewish population as eventually to necessitate certain modifications in Sultan Mohammed's laws concerning them. See chapter, "Jews in Constantinople."

a noble city, an emporium of luxury and art, and this notwithstanding that a terrible earthquake, some thirty years before, had overthrown several of its most splendid monuments. The Sultan immediately set to work to give the city an Islāmic aspect, by building an immense Palace—the Eski Seraï *—and the huge Mosque which still exists, and near which he is buried. The Bazaar, too, was reorganised, and hundreds of churches closed, but not then converted into mosques.

II.

Women have always exercised a great influence in political affairs, and their power, notwithstanding the absolute separation of the sexes, has been quite as conspicuous in its effects on Mohammedan nations, as elsewhere. The ladies of the Imperial Hareem immediately insisted upon a modification of their costume, and obtained permission to wear the ethereal veil—now called a *Yashmac*—of the Byzantine ladies, instead of the linen mask, with two holes in it for the eyes, in which they had hitherto been obliged to shroud themselves, when abroad in the streets. The Valideh sought the Sultan's permission to reorganise

The women of the Hareem.

* This earliest and discarded palace was in the heart of the city, and, after the building of the Seraglio, was known as the Old or Eski Seraï. In the reign of Suleymān it was appropriated as a residence for the families of deceased Sultans. The new, or Yeni Seraï, was for more than three centuries the heart of Ottoman history. It was only abandoned, in the first half of this century, by Abd-ul-Medjid, after the building of the Dolma Baghtcheh. The Eski Seraï was burnt down in the seventeenth century, and no trace of it remains. Its site is occupied by the Seraskerat or War Office, erected in 1870.

her house as closely as possible on the lines of the Gynecea of the unfortunate Empress Helen, widow of Constantine; and the Sultan himself set to work to place the Selāmlick, or men's department, on an entirely new footing. He was now, in his own estimation, the greatest of earthly monarchs, and possessor, to boot, of the world's fairest capital; wherefore it behoved him to make a figure in accordance with his increased station. He established himself in the enormous Palace, which he built on the site of the Theodosian Forum, and of the Capitolium; but, in 1468, he was attracted by the beauty of the ruined Great or Sea Palace overlooking the Marmara, which he forthwith began to rebuild. It had long since been abandoned by the Byzantine Emperors, for the safer Palace of the Blachernœ, within the ruined courts of which the Conqueror had philosophised on the spider and the bee. His meditations were now of a more practical character, and he determined that his Court and people should compare favourably with those of the foremost nations of Europe. He framed a code known as the *Kānun-nāmé*, or fundamental laws. This was divided into three sections: treating of the hierarchy, the ceremonies, and the commercial system to be observed throughout the Empire. The mystic number 4 was taken as the basis of the official hierarchy—in honour of the four angels who carried the Koran, and of the four great Khaliphs who were the immediate disciples of Mohammed. True to his instincts as a soldier, the Sultan likened his Empire to a tent, and the Government to the tent door, the part

which first strikes the eye. The Ottoman Government was thenceforth known as the Sublime Gate, or Porte. Its four principal dignities, or supports, were the Grand Vizir; the *Kāzī-ul-Asker*, or Judges of the Army; the *Defterdārs*, or Minister of Finance; and the *Nichānji*, or Secretary for the Signature of the Sultan. Four Vizirs, of whom the Grand Vizir was by far the most important, were appointed. To the Grand Vizir the Sultan confided the great seal of the State, and he was permitted to hold a special and secret Divan (council), to be known as the High Gate. The Kāzī-ul-Askers were two in number, one for Europe and one for Asia. They were empowered—except in one or two important instances, left in the hands of the Grand Vizir—to appoint the judges and professors of education throughout the Empire. The Nichānji signed all State documents, and sealed the Sultan's own letters and despatches, affixing the tughra (the Sultan's cipher) in wax. The councils of these dignitaries were called Divans, from the fact that the great officials who took part in them usually sat upon a divan at the upper end of the apartment. After these high magnates came the chiefs of the Army, the Agha of the Janissaries, who was also the Prefect of the Police of Constantinople, the Agha of the Sipāhīs and other cavalry; the *Toodji-Bachi*, or General of Artillery, the chamberlains, messengers, heralds, pages, etc.*

The origin of the term Sublime Porte.

The official Court.

* For a more detailed account of the Order of the Imperial Court in olden times, see Mr. Stanley Lane Poole's excellent and trustworthy account in the "Story of the Nation Series," p. 275, etc.

The reorganisation of the Hareem.

The Hareem, so far as the sterner sex was concerned, remained in the hands of six great personages: the *Kapu-Aghasi*, or chief of the White Eunuchs; the *Kizlar-Aghasi*, or chief of the Black Eunuchs; the *Bostanji-Bachi*, or head gardener; the *Tchauch-Bachi*, or chief messenger of the Seraglio; the *Khazineh-Humayūn-Vekili*, or eunuch who is Keeper of the Sultan's Privy Purse; and the *Hekim-Bachi*, or Chief Physician—often a Jew.

The Pashas.

The Pashas were also grouped into several important divisions. Thus the Governments of the various provinces were invariably confided to the charge of a Pasha* with one tail, whereas the Beylerbeys, or Pashas with two tails, had the right to levy taxes, and the privilege of assembling under their banners the various princes in the newly-acquired Christian provinces, who had made their submission to the Sultan, and many of whom, especially in Macedonia and Bulgaria, had embraced Mohammedanism.†

The first census of the Empire

So far as such a thing was possible, in those primitive times, Mohammed had a complete census taken of the population of his Empire, which included an estimate of their worldly possessions. This censorship also gave a fair account of the numerous rich mines and splendid forests throughout the Empire,

* The word Pasha is of Persian origin—*Pa-sha*, viceroy—a title of dignity, military and civil, which always follows the name of the viceroy or governor of a province.

† In former times an officer always walked in front of the Pasha, carrying a sort of sceptre, at the end of which was the tail of a white horse, the number of the tails indicating the rank of the Pasha.

the majority of which remain virgin to this day. All circumstances considered, Mohammed II. may be said to have acted wisely, both in his own interests, and those of his people. Certainly, his forbearance with regard to the Christians is remarkable, for it must be borne in mind, that whenever a Turk fell into the hands of a Christian Prince he was quite certain to be put to death, with horrible ingenuity. Stephen IV. of Moldavia, who had repulsed the Mohammedan army at Rockovidza, on Lake Balaton, impaled every Islāmite who fell into his clutches. At Scutari (of Albania) the Venetians tortured to death all the Mohammedan men, women, and children they could lay their hands upon. Wallas, Wovod of Walachia, made his name so terrible to the Turks, that they called him the Kazikli Woda, or the Impaling Wovod, because that was the torture which he inflicted, by preference, upon his Moslim prisoners. The following anecdote will give some idea of the evangelical spirit of this Prince. Sultan Mohammed once sent him an envoy, escorted by a dozen officers of high rank. In accordance with Oriental etiquette, they entered the presence of the Wovod wearing their turbans. This so enraged the tyrant, as being what he considered an impertinence, that he straightway had their turbans nailed to their skulls. Remembering these uncanny facts, we must, in all justice, grant great credit to Mohammed for that once the excitement which ensued after the siege had subsided, he rarely, if ever, wantonly retaliated upon such Christians as fell into his hands. A Franciscan writer of

Mohammed's forbearance with the Christians.

Christian cruelty.

the period states that "Christians were nowhere safer, or better treated, than in Constantinople, under the reign of Sultan Mohammed II."

Bāyezīd.

The reforming spirit of this ruler did not animate his immediate successor, Bāyezīd, a warrior Prince, whose reign was almost entirely devoted to war, and to that strange series of intrigues with Pope Alexander VI., concerning the fate of his unfortunate brother Jem, which forms one of the most extraordinary romances of history, the truth concerning which has never transpired. Bāyezīd was succeeded,

Selim I.

in 1512, by his son Selim I., surnamed Yavouz—the Ferocious—who had deposed him. This Prince inaugurated his reign by putting the whole of his family

Terrible massacres of Shi'ahs and Janissaries.

to death, so as to secure the succession to his own son. Two tremendous massacres distinguished his career—one in 1514, in which 40,000 Shi'ahs were slaughtered, and another in the following year, when some 10,000 Janissaries were killed in the streets of Constantinople in punishment of an attempted revolt. Mecca and Egypt now passed under the Ottoman yoke, and the ceremony of the procession of the Sureh-Emineh—the despatch of the Sultan's annual gifts to Mecca—took place in Constantinople for the first time in 1519.

On the 22nd September, 1520, this restless and terribly cruel Sultan suddenly expired, as he was about to start on an expedition against the Egyptians. Although not exactly a reformer, Selim I. was, never-

Selim's character.

theless, a protector of men of learning, and himself a most distinguished poet. He has left a collection of

odes in Persian, Turkish, and Arabic, some of which are exquisitely beautiful. He hated the Christians with blind prejudice, and had almost made up his mind to massacre them to a man, so as to convert Stambul into a perfectly holy city, according to Islām, uncontaminated by Christian presence. Fortunately, the illustrious and upright Mufti Jamali—the only person of his Court the Sultan feared, or cared for—entered the Sovereign's presence, and, holding the Greek Patriarch by the hand, boldly reminded the Pādishāh of the promise given by Mohammed-El-Fatih, to protect the Christian inhabitants of the Capital, and obtained confirmation of their privileges. Almost immediately after this event, however, the Sultan issued an iradé, whereby all the Christian churches—excepting one, attached to the Venetian Embassy in Stambul—were desecrated, their mosaics defaced, their altars carted away, and their empty fabrics converted into mosques. I have an old engraving representing Constantinople, as it was at the time of the death of Mohammed II., in which there are only three mosques indicated, Sancta Sophia with a single minaret, the mosque recently built by the Conqueror, and a small edifice with a minaret, close by the sea wall, near the Seraglio Point, possibly attached to the Imperial Palace. The author of an old Italian book, printed in 1503, states that there "are only eight mosques in Constantinople."* Therefore it is pretty certain that we owe the present

Mufti Jamali's liberality.

Desecration of churches.

* "Viaggi nella Turchia di Giovanni Baldinucci."—Venice, 1503.

excessive number of mosques and medrassés in Stambul to Sultan Selim I.

Suleymān I., *el-Kanuni*, the Legislator (1520–1526), was something more than a man of talent; he had genius; but he was the reverse of a reformer. He was an autocrat, and, therefore, rather prone to be retrograde, so as to secure the reins of government firmly in his own hands. He had an overweening idea of his Divine dignity, and prerogatives, and when he wrote to Charles V., he took good care to inform the Potentate that he himself was "the Sultan of Sultans, the King of Kings, the Distributor of crowns to the Princes of this world, the Shadow of God upon earth, the Emperor and Sovereign Lord of the Black Sea and the White, of Roumelia and Anatolia," etc. He granted a number of valuable privileges, however, to foreigners living in Turkey, the French settled in Egypt being specially favoured. They were allowed absolute possession of their churches and convents, and permitted to bequeath their property in the Turkish Empire to their descendants, even in France. But, owing to the animosity Suleymān entertained against the Genoese and Venetians, he deprived all the Italians, throughout his dominions, of the privileges accorded them by his predecessors. The capitulations granted to the French, by this Sultan, are too numerous and elaborate for me to specify here. Several of those which deal with commercial matters are still observed. In D'Ohsson's "Memorials" there is a very curious document, the substance of which is worth quoting. In 1534–36

Suleymān the Magnificent.

Privileges granted to foreigners.

Sultan Suleymān decreed that there should be a resident Ambassador* from France at Constantinople, and a French Consul at Alexandria; that the French traders should only pay five per cent. on their goods; that French residents in the Turkish Empire should pay no taxes for the first five years of their stay in the country, after which they were to be subject to the same taxation as other citizens; that persons of other European nationalities—English, Spaniards, Dutch, Sicilians, Genoese, etc.—whose Governments were not on friendly terms with that of the Sublime Porte, might navigate under the French flag and traffic under the protection of France, on all seas and in all countries in the Ottoman Dominions. That the French should enjoy perfect freedom of worship, and be guardians of the holy places in Palestine, which were to be served by French monks only. That all children born of a French man, by a woman of the country, should be considered to be merely tributary subjects of the Pādishāh, and should therefore remain under the protection of the French Ambassador.

The first resident French Ambassador.

Suleymān was a builder, and to him we owe the noble mosque which bears his name. He was a protector of learning, too, and at no other period of her history did Turkey possess so many illustrious men, such Grand Vizirs as Ibrāhim, Rustem,† and Sokolli

The Mosques built by Suleymān.

Famous Men.

* The first resident French Ambassador to the Porte was an Italian by birth—Count Frangipani, 1521.

† Rustem built a mosque, still standing, for the express purpose of preserving his magnificent collection of ancient Persian tiles. This beautiful little building is worth seeing on account of its glorious ceramic decoration.

Pashas; such Admirals as Khair-Eddin-Barberousse, Torghud, Dragut, and Piale; such Ministers of War (Seraskiers) as Djelai-Zada and Mohammed-Egli-Obeli; Jurists as Ebou-Sououd and Kemal-Pasha-Zada; Theologians as Sururi and Ibrāhim of Haleb; or such a Poet as Abd-ul-Baki, the greatest lyric Turkey has ever produced—unless, indeed, the palm should be awarded to Nef'i,* whose Kasīdas, or eulogies, are very fine. There were many other delightful poets: Kihali, "of rich imagination"; Fuzuli of Baghdad, who sang the delights of opium and the dreams of the Hasseesh-eaters; Rewani and Samii, who celebrated the exploits of their munificent patron.

III.

In addition to that glorious specimen of Ottoman architecture, Sinān's masterpiece, the Suleymānieh, Sultan Suleymān built the fine, but very simple, mosque over the tomb of his father Selim I., near the Adrianople Gate; the elegant Mosque of the Princes, at Galata; and the graceful little Mosque of the Sultana Khāssekī. He repaired the Aqueduct of Justinian, and enriched the city with no less than forty fountains. But as a political and social reformer he has been surpassed by several of his successors, although, under his administration, those parts of the Empire which happened to be at peace prospered in a singular degree.

Notwithstanding the brilliancy of his reign, the

* He lived in the first half of the seventeenth century, but was murdered by Murād IV. for offending him in one of his poems.

extent of his conquests, and his fairly-earned title of Magnificent, there is no doubt that the steady decline of Ottoman glory dates from Suleymān's time. Convinced that, owing to the vast extent of his Empire, it was no longer possible for the Sultan to be the head of the national religion, as well as its temporal sovereign, he increased and confirmed the power of the Sheikh-ul-Islām, making him "the first authority in matters of faith and religious discipline, subject to no one." He permitted him, further, to take precedence of the Grand Vizir, and he gave him an enormous revenue.* Still further to raise the position of the clergy, he exempted the Ulemās from taxation of every description, and granted them various privileges; which, however, he was careful not to bestow upon the Dervishes, to whom he was no friend. In a word, he created, by the side of the temporal power, a spiritual one, which, in the long run, was to become a permanent danger, as the sequel will show, to his own safety, and to that of his successors. The only form of capital punishment which could be pronounced upon an Ulemā or a Mufti, was the very singular one of pounding the offender to death in a mortar. There is a legend that Sultan Suleymān did thus pulverise a certain Sheikh-ul-Islām; but no authentic case of any one ever having been put to this eccentric form of execution is actually recorded, although, in spite of Suleymān's regulations, a number of Ulemās have, from time to time, been strangled, hanged, and beheaded, the last case being that of the Mufti Istambul

Suleymān increases the power of the priesthood.

* It is even now over £20,000 sterling per annum.

Radessy, who was decapitated, by order of Sultan Mohammed IV. (1690), in front of the Old Seraglio. There is reason to believe, therefore, that this strange method of execution was intended, from the very outset, to remain a dead letter.

The Divan and the early Sultans.

The earlier Sultans had always attended the Divan, and personally performed their complicated duties as spiritual and temporal rulers. Sultan Suleymān, after the first two years of his reign, ceased to appear in the Divan, and thereby inaugurated that custom of isolation, and of abstention from public duties, which has endured to the present day, and which Abd-ul-Hamid II. has so completely adopted, as to render him a self-constituted prisoner.

The system of abstention introduced by Sultan Suleymān unquestionably fostered, in his successors, those habits of indolence which they never seem to have been able to put aside. Suleymān is also distinguished as being the first Sultan who submitted to the caprices and paramount influence of a wife — Roxalana.

Roxalana, better known in the Turkish chronicles as Kharrém the Joyous. This ambitious woman ruled him with a rod of iron, and made him forgive crimes which should have rendered her an object of horror to him. He was the first Sultan, too, who ever raised one of his favourites to the rank of Grand Vizir. His minion, Ibrāhim, passed at a bound from slavery to the Sublime Porte, on the suggestion of the all-powerful Sultana, and with no better object on her part than that he should carry out her murderous designs. This Sultan's magnificence of living was

Suleymān's luxury.

carried to a pitch of extravagance never dreamt of by his simpler predecessors, and absolutely at variance, moreover, with the precepts of the Koran. No Court in Europe could now vie with that of Constantinople in splendour. The Mohammedan world of those days stood aghast when it became aware that, at a solemn feast in honour of the Persian Ambassador, the whole Court of Stambul banqueted off gold and silver dishes, a vanity strictly prohibited by the Prophet. Even wine was tolerated at the Khaliph's table, and often partaken of to excess.

Introduction of Coffee.

At this epoch coffee was first introduced into Turkey, and rapidly became indispensable to Mohammedan existence. Suleymān granted permission to the common soldiers among the Janissaries to marry, and this step was far from wise, since it gave them ties in the city which they otherwise could never have had, and thus robbed them of much of their independent spirit. He reorganised the administration of Egypt, diminished oppressive taxation in that country, and made some attempt to protect the Fellahs from the cruelty and greed of their taskmasters. The few genuine reforms introduced by this remarkable Sultan were counterbalanced, in the last years of his life, not only by the fanatical character of his vexatious laws against the Christians, but by the stringency of those he framed to preserve the orthodoxy of his own co-religionists. Men were put to the most awful deaths for not attending mosque five times a day, according to strict Moslim regulations. The smallest disrespect to Mollah or Dervish was punished by the

The retrogressive nature of Suleymān's reforms.

bastinado. During the latter years of this reign the Christians were treated like dogs. Several Venetians were hanged for peering into the open doors of a mosque, as they passed by, and two Genoese were stoned to death for having a sort of telescope in an open window in Galata, which looked towards the Seraglio.

IV.

Selim II.

At the time of the death of Suleymān, his son Selim II. was at Kadi Keni, just beyond Scutari, opposite Constantinople. He immediately attempted a reform in the etiquette of the Imperial Court, which attempt nearly cost him his life. No sooner did he hear that his father was dead, than he hurried to Stambul, and entered the Palace privately, instead of passing through the great portal under the drawn swords of the Janissaries, as was then the time-honoured custom. The Janissaries were furious, and Selim, who was a nervous coward, was forced to go through the ordeal, the tears, it is said, streaming down his cheeks, so great was his terror lest the uplifted weapons should suddenly fall upon his neck. This Sultan was the first who was absolutely unworthy of the throne. With all their faults and crimes, his predecessors showed themselves at least to be brave men. Selim, who for some years previous to his father's death had been Governor of Kutaya, was an arrant coward and a debauchee. He is known in Turkish history as Mest (drunkard). Not only did he drink too freely himself, he was not at all averse to his subjects following his example, and almost his first

Drunkenness of Selim.

act, when he ascended the throne, was to abolish the tax on spirituous liquors. He frequently invited common *hamals* (porters) to the Palace, and made them drunk to divert himself. Fortunately for him he had, in Mohammed Sokolli, a Grand Vizir of extraordinary ability, who extended the Ottoman dominion over Arabia, and who actually conceived the bold idea, afterwards matured by Selim III. and Baron de Tott, of piercing the Isthmus of Suez. Cyprus was wrenched by Turkish arms from the Venetians, but all the great work of Sokolli paled before the tremendous disaster of Lepanto (1571), a blow from which the Ottomans never recovered.

Sokolli. Cession of Cyprus.

Whilst Selim, hopelessly under the domination of an infamous Jew named Joseph Nassi, delivered himself up to the inconceivable forms of debauch which this scoundrel invented for his effeminate and besotted master's amusement, Sokolli laboured like a giant for the welfare of the Empire. On bended knees he had implored the Sultan not to venture into battle, against the combined fleets of Europe, but rather to help the Moors of Morocco, who were in a deplorable plight, and above all to recall Lāla Mustaphā — then High Admiral of the Turkish fleet, and one of the cruellest and most worthless of men—from the post he dishonoured. The Sultan would not heed him, and even accused him of being jealous of Lāla Mustaphā, who was at this time endeavouring to quell an insurrection in Cyprus, where, at the Siege of Famacosta, he had captured, amongst other prisoners, an Italian youth named Quirini.

The torturing of Quirini.

The diabolical tortures inflicted on this wretched lad were borne with such heroic fortitude, that when his martyrdom was reported at Venice, the Lion of St. Mark was roused to some semblance of his former fierceness. "Vogliamo vendicar Quirini" was the cry, from the Piazza of San Marco to Genoa, and from Genoa to Vienna. But when it became known that Lāla Mustaphā had caused the body of the wretched youth to be flayed, and had stuffed his salted skin with straw, and had, moreover, similarly treated other Venetian and Genoese officers, and sent their bodies to Stambul, where the mob had paraded the hideous trophies through the streets, the exasperation of Europe against the Sultan and the Turks knew no bounds. On 7th October, 1571, the Battle of Lepanto was fought, and won, by the naval forces of United Christendom. The splendid fleets built by the Sultans Selim I. and Suleymān were annihilated by Don John of Austria, Andrea Doria, and Mark Antonio Colonna, to whom, in all probability, Europe owes the fact that the majority of her churches have not been converted into mosques. Well might the Pope, standing before the altar of St. Peter's, paraphrase, in honour of Don John, the opening verse of the Gospel, "Fuit homo missus a Deo qui nomen erat Joannes." If the fury against the Turks had been terrific, the rejoicing throughout Christendom over this victory was equally extravagant.

The news of Lepanto received at Constantinople.

With the Christians in Constantinople it was otherwise. They were petrified with terror. The Sultan, with a view to protecting them, to his credit

be it said, imprisoned as many as he could possibly secure. Strange to relate, they were treated with considerable humanity, and none of them were put to death. But the monarch's display of agony and shame was worthy of his undignified character—he flung himself on the floor of his Palace, and for three days and nights he grovelled there, refusing food, and crying out to Allah to save his people.

In the midst of his despair, he received an affront such as no Sultan had ever yet endured. Hitherto no Christian, whatever his rank, had presumed to stand unannounced in the presence of the Commander of the Faithful, nor without the attendance of two Turkish officers, specially deputed for that purpose, who supported him on either side as he advanced, with lowered eyes, to the great latticed throne, in which the "Shadow of God" rested during an audience. The Marquis de Noailles, then French Ambassador, elated by the victory of the combined fleets, had the daring to disregard this formal etiquette, and one morning, to the amazement, nay, to the horror, of Sultan Selim, he came, unannounced and unaccompanied, into the august presence, and demanded, without further ceremony, that the Christians should be liberated and protected. The miserable Sultan, who still lay prostrate on the ground, the tears streaming from his eyes, granted the request. He was subsequently visited, in the course of that same day, by the various Patriarchs, who, following the example of the French Ambassador, came to him direct, without much formal ado, insisting on the

protection of their people, which was promptly accorded; and thus in the capital, at least, some semblance of order was presently restored.

Sokolli recovers his former spirit, but is murdered.

In the meantime, the brave and brilliant Sokolli was by no means disconcerted. He realised, undoubtedly, the tremendous force of the defeat, but his was too mighty a spirit to be easily dismayed. In a few months he had built a new fleet, and had even forced the Venetians to cede Cyprus; and there is reason to believe that, had it not been for Palace intrigues, he might have effectually diminished the disastrous impression produced by the sea-fight at Lepanto. But Fate ruled otherwise. Just as the Grand Vizir was preparing to attack a fresh combination of the Genoese, Venetian, and Austrian fleets, he was mysteriously murdered, at his master's instigation, by one of the jealous Sultan's minions. The death of this remarkable man brought about anarchy, which lasted for years, and extended over all parts of the Ottoman dominions. There was not a single section of the enormous Empire which was not in a state of effervescence. Egypt threatened war, and Persia prepared to declare it; at Constantinople, and in the other principal cities, massacres of Christians were matters of daily occurrence. In the midst of all this confusion and fury, Selim died, in a drunken orgy, the victim of his favourite and most unorthodox vice. He was succeeded by Murād III., who lived only a few months. His short reign was stained by a rebellion of the Janissaries, whose insolence had become intolerable.

V.

Mohammed III. (1595) now ascended the throne. He was the son of an intriguing Venetian woman, Safiā, known in Turkish history as the Baffa, and at her instigation—she was now Valideh—he inaugurated his reign by forthwith slaughtering his nineteen brothers, the more surely to secure the crown for himself. Strange as it may seem, notwithstanding the sea of blood through which he waded to the throne, Mohammed was animated, on the whole, by benevolent and liberal views. The massacre of his kinsmen was a matter of course, and produced no effect either on himself or his subjects, being absolutely a part of the Turkish system. He was gentle and dreamy in character, and was a fairly distinguished poet. His mother, the Baffa, was the real ruler. In the Genoese and Venetian archives her name is frequently mentioned with respect, and she seems to have been easy of access, as far as her own compatriots were concerned. Undoubtedly the Christians, under the reign of Mohammed III., enjoyed a degree of freedom which they had not possessed since the conquest, and, although the Baffa's reputation left much to be desired —she was well known to have been the author of the organised slaughter of her rivals' sons—she protected her fellow-countrymen and Christians. Her confederate was the celebrated Cicala Pasha, a Genoese renegade, who heroically defeated the troops of Austria and Transylvania on the plain of Kerezlia. Her remarkable qualities did not save the ambitious Princess from

The Italian Sultana.

being strangled in the end. In 1603 Mohammed died, and was succeeded by his young son, Achmet I., in whose reign the Dutch introduced to the Turks the "transcendent" weed—which has become so indispensable to their very existence—tobacco. We are so much in the habit of associating tobacco with Turkey, that it seems almost incredible that its first appearance should have been the signal for tremendous opposition on the part of the Mollahs. The Sheikh-ul-Islām issued a vigorous Fetwa against it. "It was contrary to the Koran. Smoking was a hideous and abominable practice of the Giaours, which no true believer should adopt." However, in due time, the learned discovered that tobacco was not mentioned in the Koran at all, and the Sheikh-ul-Islām had to recall his words. In a few years tobacco was cultivated on an immense scale in Turkey, and so it has continued until the present time.

Tobacco introduced.

Achmet I. was, up to this period, the only Sultan of Turkey who never drew the sword. He died, in his twenty-first year, of consumption. This Sultan and his two successors were absolutely under the domination of the famous rival Sultanas, Machpeïka and Tarkhann, to whose dramatic intrigues I have adverted in the chapter on the Sultan and his Hareem.

Achmet I.

Mustaphā I., who had spent many years a solitary prisoner in the cage (the *Kafes*), was almost an idiot when he was invested with the sword of Eyub. His first act came very near producing a European war. The story is so curious and characteristic, and, moreover, so very little known, that I will relate it in

Mustaphā I.

an abbreviated form as I found it given in some unedited documents which I transcribed from the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.* It appears that the First Secretary of the French Embassy in Constantinople at that time was a M. Achille de Harlay. One day he was visited in his study at the Embassy by two ladies heavily veiled. As they were Christians, on his entreaty they unveiled, and the excellent youth fell desperately in love at first sight with the younger lady, who had accompanied her mother. They had come from Poland, after many adventures, to solicit the pardon of the elder lady's brother, the Prince Kostaky, a Polish nobleman, who had been taken prisoner and confined in the prison of the Seven Towers. They had been unable to obtain an interview with the Grand Vizir, and had therefore imagined the wisest thing for them to do was to see the French Ambassador, M. de Savary de Bréves, and beg his influence with the Grand Vizir and the Sultan, to obtain the release of the Prince. His Excellency evidently turned the matter over to M. de Harlay, with surprising results. A good many interviews ensued, and in due course M. de Harlay proposed for the hand of the young lady. Being assured that in a short time the Prince would be released, the Grand Vizir having given his promise to that effect, the lady and her daughter returned to their own country, viâ Varna. Before leaving she promised M. de Harlay she would obtain her husband's sanction to the marriage, which was to take place as soon as the Prince Kostaky was safe. M. de Harlay, after a

* "Correspondance des Ambassadeurs Français en Orient."

great many interviews with the Grand Vizir, obtained permission to pay frequent visits to the Prince in his prison, and, whether with a view of hastening his marriage or not, was guilty of the extreme folly of abetting his escape. Kostaky left the Seven Towers in disguise, and, fortunately for him, was not recaptured.

Curious adventure of M. de Harlay, the first Secretary of the French Embassy.

When the Sultan heard of the adventure his rage knew no bounds; not only was M. de Harlay arrested, but the entire Embassy, Ambassador and all, were lodged in the very prison from which the Prince had just escaped. As may well be imagined, when the news of this adventure reached France the matter assumed ugly proportions. In the meantime, Sultan Mustaphā fell victim to a Court intrigue, and when, in April, 1618, the French Envoy, M. de Nons, arrived with the view of obtaining the release of his predecessor, he had the satisfaction of finding the Sultan himself a prisoner in the Seven Towers, and of learning that his Grand Vizir had recently been strangled. Mustaphā being deposed and kept a prisoner, Othmān II. was proclaimed Khaliph. He immediately made peace with France. M. de Savary, the late Ambassador, M. de Harlay and the other secretaries, returned to France laden with magnificent presents for Louis XIII. and for themselves; but whether M. de Harlay ever married the Polish lady who was the cause of an adventure which might have set Europe in flames, I have not been able to ascertain.

Othmān's reign was a short and a terrible one. Fearing that the power of the Sheikh-ul-Islām was

becoming too formidable, he ventured, at the suggestion of his mother, the Valideh-Sultan, to diminish it. His brother Mohammed opposed his measures, and was immediately imprisoned, Othmān ordering him to be strangled. "Brother Othmān," he cried, whilst in the agonies of death, "I pray Allah that your life may be shortened, even as you have shortened mine, and that you may perish by the same death as myself!" And so it was. The Janissaries rebelled against the young Sultan and threw him into the Seven Towers. Here they degraded him in the most cruel and subtle manner, and, like wild cats, put him to a horrible and lingering death. To his credit, however, it should be recorded that, being a youth of exceptional vigour, he contrived to kill no less than six of his executioners before he himself succumbed to their sword-thrusts. This is the first regicide recorded in Ottoman history, and happened on 16th May, 1618. The half-crazy Mustaphā was now released and reproclaimed Sultan. "Wherefore," asked the Sipāhīs of Daoud Pasha, the Grand Vizir, "hast thou killed Sultan Othmān?" "By order," replied Daoud, with thoroughly Oriental yet absolutely unconscious theatrical effect, "by order of the ruler of the world, Sultan Mustaphā." And he knelt at the feet of the idiot Sovereign, who laughed vacantly. His reign was a short one, and he was subsequently made away with in a mysterious manner.

Sultan Othmān's awful death.

VI.

During the next seven years the whole Empire was in a state of rebellion and turmoil, and reforms

were impossible. The long reign of Murād IV. stands out prominently in the midst of this tumultuous disorder, on account of the memorable siege of Erzerum, in 1627. The city, after a long and heroic resistance, succumbed to the Turks, who put to the sword every Armenian—man, woman, and child—they could discover. Seventy thousand Armenians are said to have perished in Erzerum and its vilāyet alone. Massacres of Armenians also took place on a great scale at Bitlis, Van, Aleppo, and in almost all those cities, indeed, with whose names we have of late, and for the selfsame reason, become so painfully familiar.

Horrible massacre of Armenians under Murād III.

Meanwhile, to make matters worse, the plague broke out, and was followed by a terrible famine. Mr. Abel Cook, an English merchant, writes at this period, from Constantinople: "It is not safe to walk abroad in the streets by day, let alone by night. The dogs are so ravenous from lack of food, that it is dangerous to go near them. People sell and eat their dead. The Sultan is generous, and gives much assistance to the people in money and in kind; but the distress is beyond belief, you cannot conceive anything like it. I beg of you to ask for prayers to be said for us in all your churches, for we Christians are in a dreadful plight. Even a rat is welcome food."

A plague and famine in Constantinople.

The plague and the famine did not, however, prevent an appalling tragedy from taking place within the Seraglio itself. Hâfiz Pasha, then Secretary of State, one of the finest characters in Turkish history, did his best to bring something like order into the distracted Empire and capital; but he had the misfortune, by his

judicious endeavours to limit both their extravagance and their power, to offend the Janissaries. Determined to be avenged upon him, they worked upon the ignorance of the populace, and led the people to believe that the famine was due to the Pasha's avarice. One day they rushed into Sultan Murād's presence demanding the head of his able and honest minister. Hâfiz was hidden behind a curtain; but, perceiving that the Sultan's life would be in danger if he did not reveal himself, he raised the folds, and standing majestically by the side of his afflicted master, cried out: "I am ready; the will of Allah be done!" On this the assassins fell upon him, showing no respect either for his noble qualities or for his white beard. He was literally hacked to pieces at the feet of the powerless Sultan. When the murderers had left the apartment, Murād knelt down, and, kissing the brow of his murdered and venerable friend, swore a terrible vengeance against the Janissaries. He kept his word. In a few months he retaliated by a massacre of the regiment which had plotted the assassination of his favourite. He may well be said to have dug the grave of this powerful corps, for, from that hour, until its final destruction in 1826, its members were never safe. The sword of Damocles hung above their heads, ready to fall at any moment.

The rise and fall of the Janissaries.

The rise and fall of the Janissaries is so important a factor in the history of reform in Turkey, that, at the risk of being accused of retailing an oft-told tale, I must relate it. The creation of the corps was, in a certain sense, the outcome of an early attempt at

reform. When, in the first half of the fourteenth century, Orkhān fixed his Court at Brusa, and reorganised his Government, he realised that the undisciplined condition of the Turkish army was likely to become a permanent danger to the State. To bring his troops into some sort of order, he reorganised the *akindschis*, or light cavalry, which had performed such marvellous feats of valour under his father, but which, never having been regularly disciplined, had invariably to be disbanded at the close of each campaign. The excellent intentions of the Sultan proved ineffectual, and he was about to give up all attempt at introducing any better system, when Khālil-Djendereli—one of his ablest generals—suggested to him the idea of collecting as many Christian children as could be laid hands on, bringing them up in the faith of Islām, and forming them into a body-guard. "It would," said he, "be a great and a noble work to bestow upon these infidels the blessings of the true religion." "Then again," he added, "as these children will have lost all trace of their parents, and will have no ties among the people they are called to live amongst, they will be all the freer to serve their Princes, whom Allah ordains they shall obey." The blessing of Allah and the Prophet was bestowed upon the new troops by the venerable Sheikh Hadji-Bektash, who had recently instituted the order of the Bektāshee Dervishes. "Orkhān," said he to the Sultan, "the new body-guard you have created shall be called the Yeni-Tscheri (the new regiment). It shall be victorious in all its undertakings, its face shall be

white,* its arm redoubtable, its sword invincible, and its arrows sure."

The organisation of the new corps gave matter for considerable thought. Consisting, as they did, entirely of men originally belonging to alien races, and, above all, to an inimical faith, it was urgent to give them such advantages as should render their fidelity a matter of self-interest. For this purpose they were better paid, better clothed, and better housed than any other body of men in the Empire. Each Janissary received daily a sum equivalent to eight-pence of our money, two loaves of bread, half a pound of mutton, one hundred ounces of rice, and thirty ounces of butter. In honour of Sheikh Hadji-Bektash, their head-dress was shaped after that of the Dervishes, a high, conical cap like a stocking nightcap, usually made of gray felt. The new troops were educated and fed, from a very early age, at the Sultan's expense. Their banner was the saucepan (Kazan)† which served to boil their soup. And all their titles were culinary. Thus their supreme commander was known as the *tchorbadji-bachi*, or first soup distributor; after him came the *t'achtchi-bachi*, or first cook; then came the *sakka-bachi*, or water-carrier. The front of their caps bore, instead of a cockade, a wooden spoon. The corps consisted at first of only 1,000 men, but every year thousands of

The tribute of Christian children.

* Among the Turks the expression "white-face" was honourable, while "black-face" was an insult.

† Several enormous Kazans, or saucepans, which belonged to the Janissaries, are still shown in the desecrated church of St. Irene in Stambul, now a museum.

Christian children were kidnapped to swell the ranks. We may estimate that in the course of four centuries, millions of children were sacrificed to the barbarous policy of the Turkish Sultans. "Surely," says Théophile Lavallée, "the most terrible tribute of flesh and blood ever exacted by a conquering nation and a victorious religion from a defeated people and a vanquished faith!" It marks the profound degradation into which the Christian population of the East had fallen under the tyrannical domination of their conquerors, and justifies the execration in which the Ottomans have ever been held by those Europeans who have had the misfortune to succumb to their ill-will. It explains, too, how it came to pass that, in the Middle Ages, the Turkish Government could always command the services of an army of 500,000 to 600,000 men; while, at the present time, it cannot, without the greatest difficulty, raise more than 300,000. According to an address, still extant, presented by the Muphti to Sultan Achmet III. in 1720, the Janissaries were originally recruited in this fashion. Every Christian family in those provinces which had been conquered by the Ottoman, was obliged to give up at least one or two of their male children, not over nine years of age, to a commissioner, specially appointed to receive the cruel tribute. Other children were deliberately kidnapped, while others again were saved from those frequently recurring massacres of Christians which disgrace the annals of Turkish history; and thus a formidable army of infants was annually sent up to Constantinople. A heavy proportion died on the

road, and, in an immense number of cases, parents put their offspring to death rather than let them fall into the hands of the Mohammedans. When the children reached Constantinople, they were duly examined, and, if considered strong and well-shaped, they were distributed to certain Seraïs (barracks), set apart for the purpose. The weakly ones were sold as slaves, or else killed. Their more fortunate companions were educated in the principles of Islām, and at the end of five years were drafted into the Odjāks, or regiments, to commence their military education. Every seven years, those who had died were replaced. The rank and file were, until the reign of Suleymān, never allowed to marry, and each had to inhabit his own separate oda, or cell. On the other hand, they were granted an enormous number of privileges, and at a very early period they undoubtedly organised themselves into a sort of secret society. The officers were from the first allowed to marry on promotion, and so exalted a personage was the Agha of the Janissaries (*tchorbadji-bachi*) considered, that it was possible for him to marry into the Imperial family.

VII.

Insubordination of the Janissaries.

It was not until about the end of the sixteenth century that the Janissaries began to show signs of insubordination. That they did so was due, in a great measure, to the unsatisfactory condition into which the whole Empire had fallen after the death of Suleymān the Magnificent. Possibly, however, their greatest incentive to misconduct was mainly owing to the fact

that Sultan Selim II., for some unexplained reason, had allowed born Mohammedans to enter the corps, thus creating a spirit of jealousy between the majority, which was of Christian origin, and the new-comers, who had acknowledged family ties in the country. But as the Empire grew feebler and feebler in its administration, the Janissaries became correspondingly powerful, and, although they provoked the jealousy of the Mollahs, they still contrived to hold their own, and to tyrannise over the people. They were averse to any sort of reform, and their lack of discipline rendered them a scourge to the entire country. "The mere sight of a Janissary makes the people fly," says Baron de Tott, "in order to escape from their insolent brutality." Nevertheless, every European merchant was obliged, by law, to keep a Janissary attached to his service, and in the old houses of Galata may still be seen the small apartment beside the entrance originally set apart for the accommodation of this armed porter. The only trace of the Janissaries in our time exists in the shape of the Kawās, or armed Mohammedan servants, attached to the service of the various Embassies, whose smart costumes are among the few distinctively Oriental features remaining in Constantinople. These Kawās are now also employed by wealthy merchants and financiers, although this is not strictly legal.

The Court of the Janissaries.

In the partly-ruined Seraglio, there still exists an ill-omened courtyard, known as the Court of the Janissaries. It has witnessed their merry-makings in times of peace and triumph; and thither they often

rushed, like a horde of terrible savages, beating their drums and kettles like madmen, and rending the air with their wild cries for largesse, or their clamours for the deposition of a Sultan, or the murder, there and then, of a hated Grand Vizir. Prominent in the foreground of this sinister precinct stands an enormous plane-tree, which eight men, standing in a circle, cannot gird with their outstretched arms. Beneath its wide-spreading boughs the Janissary conspiracies were hatched, and its tremendous branches, like so many giant gibbets, used often, of a morning, to be weighed down by the burden of hundreds of dangling corpses. The majestic old tree, rich as ever in foliage, stands erect and noble still, and children play in its shade, little dreaming, as they laugh and shout, of the horrors it has witnessed, whilst the Bosphorus glittered in the distance, as it glitters yet, a sheet of azure and gold, with the domes of Scutari rising from its sheeny surface on the far, dim horizon.

VIII.

The deplorable state of Turkey in the seventeenth century.

During the last quarter of the seventeenth century the condition of the European provinces of Turkey became deplorable. Whatever civilisation had been attained was well-nigh obliterated; the only vestige of independence left them was their Christian faith, and this consolation was more often than not a source of serious danger, provoking frequent and terrible massacres of men, women, and children. As is so often the case, the renegades became the cruellest of tyrants, and those Christian Princes who, for interested motives, had assumed the turban, developed into

veritable scourges to their unfortunate brethren, whom they taxed and tormented beyond endurance. In this they were often aided and abetted by the Mohammedan governors, sent out from Constantinople with a view of enabling them to enrich themselves by tyrannical deeds, rather than of protecting the luckless peoples under their rule. The Janissaries, too, by their insolence and permanent state of insubordination added to the general discontent. From 1684 to 1690 there was not a single Vilāyet in the whole of the Ottoman Empire which was not either in open rebellion or smouldering in discontent.

Sultan Murād IV.

I must now pass on to a too notorious Sultan, Murād IV., who ascended the throne in 1622. In a certain sense he resembled Pope Sixtus V., who believed the sword to be a capital remedy for evil-doing. Tens of thousands of bandits were put to death during the first months of his reign, in every part of the Empire, and, in Constantinople itself, those who were not careful to walk in the paths of righteousness and orthodoxy ran imminent danger of falling into the hands of this Ottoman Pedro the Cruel. It must, however, be confessed that Murād frequently directed his unrelenting sense of justice, if so it can be described, against the oppressors of the poor, to whom he was, as a rule, both just and merciful. He did not exactly reform his house, but he did undoubtedly set it in some sort of order, and proved that he understood justice to mean equality before the law, for all men, great and small, rich and poor alike. Several of his Grand Vizirs were made aware of this fact in an uncom-

fortable manner—one of them was actually hanged for beating his mother-in-law! Had he lived long enough, Murād might possibly have rivalled Suleymān, but he fell a victim early in his career to one of those extraordinary orgies for which the old Seraglio was famous. Paul Rycaut, who was in Constantinople in Murād IV.'s time, gives us a vivid picture of his pleasant "tricks and manners." "He was," says he, "insupportable when in his cups. The Pashas of greatest note he put to death, and confiscated their estates to his Exchequer, and whereas avarice and cruelty were equally predominant in his nature, there was scarce a day wherein he made not some demonstration of these dispositions. The English Ambassador, making some instance for the releasement of English slaves from captivity, was forced to purchase their liberty by giving Russian, or other slaves, in the place of the English. He took singular delight to sit in a Kiosk by the seaside, and from thence to shoot at the people with his bow and arrows as they rowed near the banks of the Seraglio, which caused the boatmen afterwards to keep themselves at a distance from the walls of the Seraglio. And as he likewise took pleasure to go from one garden to another on the Bosphorus, so, if he observed any so bold as to put forth his head to see him pass, he commonly made him pay the price of his curiosity by shooting him with his carabine. It cannot be expressed, the dread and fear in which the people stood of him." This agreeable Sultan, like his hated successor, lived in dread of assassination and conspiracy. He used to go about of a night with his

boon companion and minion, Bianchi, a renegade Italian, and visit, incognito, the lowest taverns. If he caught a man smoking, he at once revealed himself by cutting the fellow's head off there and then. And in the last year of his reign all lights had to be extinguished an hour after sunset under pain of death. Rycaut tells us "he was of no religion, and never fasted in Ramazān, or observed the prescribed prayers of the faith of which he was supreme ruler." On one occasion he caught one of his gardeners and his wife smoking, whereupon he caused them to be seized, had their legs cut off, and ordered them, thus mutilated, to be exhibited in a public place until they died.

Murād was succeeded by his brother Ibrāhim, a man of exceedingly violent character, but who did at least one great act in the course of his brief reign. He was the second Sultan to defy the Janissaries, and the first to conceive the possibility of disciplining them. Here, however, he failed utterly. The Janissaries proved too much for him, and one fine morning, in response to an iradé which he had issued against them, their Agha, or chief, presented himself suddenly in His Majesty's presence, summarily informed him he "was deposed," and forthwith strangled him.

The introduction of the printing-press.

From this period until the reign of Sultan Achmet III., early in the eighteenth century, when the printing-press was introduced, no reform of any importance took place in Turkey. Everything was in a state of absolute chaos. The printing-press was, as may well be imagined, resisted by the priesthood, with all the influence and fierceness of well-

organised and narrow-minded bigots. It was pronounced an innovation of Satan, sure to bring every sort of heresy and infidelity in its train. The Sultan, who had other and more liberal views on the subject, in order to carry his point, bribed the Sheikh-ul-Islām, who reluctantly granted permission for the establishment of printing-presses in the Empire, on the condition that the printing of the Koran or any of the canonical books should be forbidden,* and that a rigorous censorship to suppress heretical and revolutionary literature should be forthwith established. I have elsewhere mentioned the existence of an order of Dervishes known as the Bektāshee, and have pointed out their remarkable influence on the promotion of reforms and the introduction of a revolutionary spirit into the Ottoman Empire. Founded, as has been already stated, by Hadji-Bektash, the character of this order of Mohammedan monks was at first purely military, and for centuries the Janissaries had been affiliated to them. They were the chief nurturers of that fanatical spirit, one of the mainsprings of the sacred fury which distinguished the Turks in battle. They were always in the front rank, howling at the top of their voices, "Allah Akbar! Allah Akbar!" At the Siege of Constantinople their activity was unceasing. But in the early part of the eighteenth century, a curious change came over this warlike body, which, whilst retaining its military character, did not disdain the promotion of philosophical studies. About this period

* The Jews had a printing-press in Stambul in the sixteenth century, but it only printed works in Hebrew.

certain wealthy Turks were permitted, for the first time, to visit Europe, either as travellers, or for educational purposes, or accompanying the various Turkish Ambassadors on their missions. A Bektāshee, Izet Bey, visited Paris, and there formed the acquaintance of Voltaire and of other leading lights of the Encyclopédie. On his return to Constantinople, he introduced into the order, already a secret society, certain philosophical, or even free-thinking views, which, in due time, had a prodigious influence on the entire body. The Bektāshee availed themselves of the printing-presses, and a number of pamphlets, of a distinctly revolutionary tendency, adapted, probably, if not exactly translated, from the French, were circulated among the principal leaders of the reform movement throughout the Empire. The impression produced alarmed not only the Mollahs, but also the Sultan himself. An attempt was immediately made to suppress the Bektāshee, and to abolish the printing-press. But the Bektāshee, evading the commands of the Sultan, carried on their work as persistently as ever, and the presses continued theirs. In vain did Sultan Murād endeavour to combat the occult influence. The order became unpopular in orthodox circles, and its ranks were greatly thinned. But persecution generally defeats its own ends, and the Bektāshee, though diminished in number, increased their zeal for the introduction of reform. Nevertheless, the internal condition of the country remained desperate. "Such is the state of Constantinople," wrote Bocaretto, an Italian traveller, in 1752, "that it is dangerous to go

The attempted suppression of the printing-press.

Condition of Stambul in 1752.

even the length of the street without being accompanied by armed servants. At night it is quite impossible to step abroad, without running the risk of a disagreeable adventure. There are no lights, excepting lanterns, and the pavement and roads are so dreadful that, unless one has seen it, one could scarcely believe human beings could live in such filth. Every day there is some fresh tragedy. The other morning I saw a pyramid of human heads on the left side of the principal entrance to the Imperial Palace. Most of these heads looked like those of very ugly old women. I was afterwards informed that they originally belonged to some fifty white eunuchs, who had offended the Sultan. At the Seven Towers, a number of prisoners, among them several Christians, were thrown, the other day, over the parapet of the Tower which is annexed to the Torture Chamber, and which stands at the corner of the square in which political executions usually take place. You can see, from the road, naked and still living men, caught on long spikes, where they will have to remain until death delivers them." "Everywhere it is the same thing, and, were it not for the extraordinary wealth and the naturally buoyant character of this people, it would be utterly impossible for them to cope with their unreasonable Government."

Death of Mahmūd I.

On the 13th of December, 1754, died Sultan Mahmūd I., after a reign of twenty-four years. He was a man of amiable character, but although he evidently desired to reform many things, he does not appear to have possessed any system. His successor,

Othmān, only reigned a few days, and was succeeded,
Mustaphā III. in 1757, by his nephew, Mustaphā III., who inaugurated his reign by issuing several Draconian edicts, which rendered him exceedingly unpopular. But in a few months he gave signs of much sagacity, and it became evident that he was determined to reform many glaring abuses. His popularity with the ladies of his family and household was, doubtless, considerably diminished when they heard he had resolved to curtail their expenses, especially in the matter of dress and jewellery. He chose for his chief favourite and minister Rāghib Pasha, a capable man, of fairly broad views, much under the influence of a German professor, who had introduced himself to him under amusing circumstances. One day this individual arrived at the Palace in a tattered condition. "Tell the Grand Vizir," said he to an attendant, "that Mahomet appeared to me in a dream, whilst I was at Dantzic, where I was formerly a schoolmaster. The Prophet told me to come to Stambul, where, he assured me, I should be received with open arms, and make my fortune."

"This must be an astonishing man," said the Vizir, "since the Prophet has condescended to appear to him, who is an infidel, and has left me, a true believer, for now nearly fifty years without the grace of a glimpse of him."

Schiller and the Grand Vizir. The German, whose name was Schiller, turned Mohammedan, and was instrumental in creating many reforms in the educational system of the country.

Baron de Tott. About this time, too, a French gentleman (Baron

de Tott) arrived in Constantinople, on the invitation of the Sultan, who had heard of him through one of his agents in Paris as being a skilled engineer and a man of considerable general ability. The Baron was an astute little gentleman, and soon won, not only the confidence, but the affection of the Sultan. Fortunately he bequeathed to posterity his "Memoirs," which throw considerable light on events in Turkey — more especially in Constantinople — during the many years he lived there. He had long conversations with the Sultan, in the course of which he sought to convince His Majesty that it was utterly impossible for the Empire to continue intact, unless, not only its internal administration, but even the build of the ships of war, and the style of the weapons of defence, underwent considerable modifications. As to the army, De Tott boldly told the Sultan "it would be annihilated in its first encounter with a European force, so greatly improved are the weapons now in use among Western nations." The Commander of the Faithful, convinced, handed over the charge of his fleet and his army to the astute Baron, bidding him reorganise them as best he pleased. De Tott has left us an amusing account of the condition of the Turkish army and navy at the time he undertook this task. "Their weapons are the same as were used in the days of Sennacherib. As to their ships, they are utterly worthless; the men are ignorant of even the most trivial details of their business. They know absolutely nothing, and their superstition baffles belief. They are very brave and

very religious, but otherwise quite useless. The army consists of innumerable hordes of barbarians, whose officers wear the most fantastic garments imaginable. The Janissaries are the terror of the country, and will submit to no sort of discipline. They refuse to live in their barracks, which are filthy, and their insolence to foreigners is beyond endurance. I passed a group of them yesterday—they were seated outside a shop door eating melons; the rind of one of these they threw at me, crying out at the same time: 'There goes a —— Giaour!' I dared not retaliate, for, had I done so, I should, in all probability, have fared badly. These outlandish creatures render life in this metropolis impossible. As to the Courts of Law, nothing can exceed the disorder which reigns in them. In a word, if this Empire is to be saved, everything must be reorganised on an entirely new basis." De Tott worked for his master with a zeal which should never be forgotten by enlightened Turks, for to his influence all reform in Turkey—in the modern sense of that term—must be ascribed. I am not aware that De Tott has ever been credited with his work in connection with an enterprise which originated with Mustaphā III., *i.e.*, the piercing of the Isthmus of Suez, for which the Baron prepared some very remarkable plans, still in existence. In his "Memoirs," he assigns the original conception of the scheme to the Sultan, but this will not prevent its being associated for ever with the name of Ferdinand de Lesseps. Death unfortunately carried off Sultan Mustaphā before he was able to realise his projects.

His brother, Abd-ul-Hamid I., also a man of liberal views, was unable to attend to the internal improvement of his dominions. His brief reign was overshadowed by the series of disasters which befel the Ottoman army at the hands of victorious Russia. He died broken-hearted, leaving his sceptre to his nephew, Selim III., the pupil of Mustaphā, and the patron of De Tott.

IX.

It is impossible to enter here into the details of the various measures of reform, introduced by the successive Sultans of the eighteenth century, very few of which, however, were effectual; for, however well conceived they might have been, there was no chance of their success so long as the Janissaries remained unsubdued. No one knew this better than Sultan Selim III. Selim III.

He opened his reign by the introduction of several urgent measures of a reforming character, and in so doing he had, needless to say, to face extraordinary complications abroad, accentuated by the appearance on the stage of history of that incarnate genius of war, Napoleon I. He allied himself with England and Russia, against Bonaparte, and, although he had the humiliation of learning that Napoleon had "surveyed twenty centuries from the top of the pyramids," he received some consolation from the destruction of the French Fleet, at Aboukir, by the English, which sensibly diminished the effect of the Egyptian successes of the "petit caporal"—for, if Bonaparte was master of the situation from Cairo to St. John-of-Acre, Britannia

still ruled the waves. It is remarkable that this Sultan, notwithstanding countless complications abroad, should have continued the well-intentioned work of his two predecessors. He even permitted M. de Verninac, the Envoy of the French Republic, to establish, in 1795, a weekly newspaper in the French language—*Le Moniteur de l'Orient*—of which some twenty numbers were actually published. This marks the first attempt to establish journalism in Turkey; but it was not very successful.

Sultan Selim's reforms.

Early in Selim's reign, he determined to bring the Janissaries into something like discipline, or else to disband them. But, even now, they were stronger than the sovereign, and the fate of Sultans Othmān and Ibrāhim awaited the would-be reformer. He was deposed by order of the Sheikh-ul-Islām, who was at the head of a vast conspiracy, in which the Ulemās, as well as the Janissaries, were actively engaged, to place Selim's cousin Mustaphā—a man of little or no intelligence, but fanatically orthodox and retrograde—upon the throne. Selim was now literally without a friend in his own house; for his mother, the Sultana Valideh, a most bigoted woman, had turned against him, and favoured Mustaphā. His famous and very capable minister, Baraïcktar, Pasha of Rustchuk, was absent at the wars; but no sooner did he hear of his master's danger, than he suddenly returned to Constantinople, and the dawn of 28th July, 1807, saw him encamped within a mile of the city. On that very morning the Janissaries were assembled, on mischief bent, in the great Square at the At'-Meidan, close

to Sancta Sophia. The Palace was less well guarded than the Valideh-Sultan had imagined; for, when she commanded the Kizlar-Agha to murder Selim, who had been relegated to a retired part of the Seraglio, she was unaware that Baraïcktar had secretly entered the city with a small but faithful troop of men, and had actually penetrated as far as the inner courtyard of the Palace, at the very moment when his unfortunate master was being stabbed to death. Sultan Mustaphā, who had witnessed, and personally directed the murder of his cousin, spurned the body with his foot, and raising the heavy curtain which masked the door of the apartment, cried aloud: "Hand over Sultan Selim to the Pasha of Rustchuk, if he desires to possess the swine's carcase!" Just then the doors were burst open, and Baraïcktar, at the head of his troops, precipitated himself into the apartment, upon which the miserable Mustaphā, collapsing at the sight, fled as fast as his legs would carry him, by a back door, into the Hareem. Baraïcktar threw himself, weeping bitterly, upon his master's corpse, and strove to stay the blood which was pouring from his many wounds. "Is it for the Pasha of Rustchuk," cried the spectators, "to weep like a woman? Let us avenge Sultan Selim! Let us punish his assassins! Above all, let us save Sultan Mahmūd!"

I have elsewhere related how Mahmūd Effendi had been hidden by his mother—a Frenchwoman—in an empty bath stove, from which shelter he heard the soldiers announce the death of his cousin Selim, and proclaim his brother Mustaphā Pādishāh. There

Sultan Mahmūd II.

he lay until the evening, when the wretched Mustaphā was assassinated, in his turn. Mahmūd II. may well be called the reforming Sultan *par excellence.* He remained true, however, to the instincts of his race as regards the savage fashion in which he avenged the death of Selim. There was a general massacre of all the ministers, eunuchs, and servants of the last two Sultans. The women of the Hareem of Sultan Mustaphā, some hundred and sixty of them, were tied up in sacks, and cast into the Bosphorus. Mahmūd, who was a pupil of Selim III., was a man of considerable ability, if not of absolute genius. Physically he was, according to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, of diminutive stature. His head was large and his features regular and handsome. He had astonishingly expressive eyes and a wonderfully powerful voice.

x.

When, in 1810, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, then Mr. Canning, and only twenty-five years of age, first appeared in Constantinople as our Plenipotentiary, he was received in audience by Sultan Mahmūd, and although not highly impressed with His Majesty's appearance, was struck by the barbaric splendour of the reception. "The cumbrous ceremonies of Turkish Court etiquette were not yet divested of their antique forms. A long procession on horseback, interrupted by a row across the harbour, in boats of Turkish fashion, led to the Porte, or to the Seraglio, according as the Grand Vizir or the Grand Signior was to receive the Embassy. The pageant began at a very

Lord Stratford de Redcliffe visits the Sultan.

early hour and took up the greater part of a day. The ceremonial included a dinner given by the Vizir. The Christian guests were next invested, from the Ambassador downwards, with a pelisse or fur-lined robe of some kind, according to the rank of each.

"The Sultan's throne, which resembled a four-post bedstead, hung with cloth of gold and studded with jewels, almost filled the dark room in which he received the English Ambassador. He sat in the ordinary posture of the West, his feet supported by a step. This attitude was considered a great innovation. Hitherto he had received his guests seated cross-legged, tailor fashion. Near him, at one side, was a rich casket, and at the other a scimitar, half-drawn. The chief officers of State, in their splendid costumes, invented from those seen in a dream by Suleymān the Magnificent, were ranged on his right. The Ambassador, secretary, and suite stood opposite. His Excellency delivered a short address; the Sultan and his Vizir replied. The two speeches were successively interpreted, and thus the audience concluded. The dead silence was broken only by the speeches—a lighted lamp glimmered, and a small fountain trickled, in their respective corners, and two spare turbans of Imperial shape appeared in a recess near the throne."*

* On the occasion of Canning's first audience, an incident took place so amusingly characteristic of Lord Byron, who was then in Constantinople, as to be worth recording. "We had," he says, "assembled for the first audience in the hall of our so-called palace, when Lord Byron arrived in scarlet regimentals, topped by a profusely feathered cocked hat, and, coming up to me, asked what his place (as a Peer of the realm) was to be in the procession. I referred

As a contrast to this first audience, and as illustrating the rapid change effected in Turkish Court life under Mahmūd, the following description of an audience granted by the same Sultan, some fifteen years later, is not without interest: "This time His Majesty was dressed, more or less, like a European general, in a dark blue frock-coat, richly embroidered, white cashmere trousers, black shoes, and a fez upon his head. Almost all the former stately surroundings had disappeared, and instead of sitting in his birdcage-like throne as heretofore, the Pādishāh occupied an arm-chair, and actually permitted the Ambassador to sit in another, side by side with him. He spoke, of course, through an interpreter, but very much as one gentleman would to another, and there was no attempt whatever at Oriental stateliness." In 1810, Constantinople was, Lord Stratford tells us, very little altered from what it had been five hundred years before. In 1842, he writes: "What engrosses every-

An audience with the Sultan after the reforms.

him to Mr. Adair, who had not left his room, and the upshot of his private interview was that, as the Turks ignored all but officials, any amateur, though a Peer, must be content to follow in the wake of the Embassy. His lordship then walked away, with that look of scornful indignation which so well became his imperious features. Next day, the Ambassador, having consulted the Austrian Internuncio, and received a confirmation of his own opinion, wrote to apprise Lord Byron. The reply gave assurance of the fullest satisfaction, and ended with a declaration that the illustrious penitent would, if permitted, attend the next audience in His Excellency's train, and humbly follow 'his ox, or his ass, or anything that was his.' In due time he redeemed his pledge by joining the procession as a simple individual, and delighted those who were nearest to him by his well-bred cheerfulness and good-humoured wit."

body here is the extraordinary change which is daily taking place in the manners of this people. You yourself witnessed the commencement of this change, but if I am to believe ——, every person who has been absent, and has now returned, notices the change since your departure, which has been most extraordinary. Very few years more, and not a turban will exist. Grand Vizir, Reis Effendi, Ulemi, employés of every description, now wear the red cap, Cossack trousers, black boots, and a plain red or blue cloak buttoned under the chin. No gold embroidery, no jewels, no pelisses. The Sultan wears a blue jacket, Cossack trousers, black boots, and the red cap like the others, and he now contemplates adding a shade to the latter. He has paid a visit to Madame Hübsch, has been boar-shooting at Belgrade, on which occasion he borrowed Black's gun, and, in fact, behaved so unaccountably that . . . . Cartwright—the Consul—cannot account for it in any other way than by believing him cracked, and he supposes that it is to be attributed to drinking. Charbert assures me that all the old Turks are outrageous, and several have lamented to him that they were becoming infidels. The young ones, however, are all decidedly in favour of the new system, and of such his officers and armies are composed. I have not seen an officer of regulars who was apparently above thirty. Some of the soldiers appear scarce fourteen; they go through the evolutions with great precision, and have entirely the appearance of regular troops. The Sultan himself appears sometimes, incognito, at the capital, with

Changes in the national costume.

scarce any attendant, goes to the mosque in the dress I have described, and although some of the populace have occasionally betrayed their discontent by abuse, he has, apparently, taken not the slightest notice of it."

Men have often wondered how it came to pass that Mahmūd, a man of no education, who could barely read or write his own language, and was reputed unfamiliar with any other, could possibly have conceived the schemes of reform which he attempted to carry into effect. Although it is difficult to draw the bolts which bar the Hareem portals from the Giaour, some facts generally leak out concerning the lives and actions of its more important inmates. And there is much reason to think that Mahmūd was guided mainly by his mother, who, strange to say, was a Frenchwoman. The history of Naschedil-Sultan, consort of Abd-ul-Hamid I., and mother of Mahmūd, is one of the most romantic in the world. She was a native of Martinique, that little West Indian island which bestowed Madame de Maintenon and the Empress Joséphine on France. Her maiden name was, it seems, Aimée Dubuc de Rivéry, and as a girl she was intimate, if not actually connected, with, Joséphine Tascher de la Pagérie. At any rate, her childhood was passed in the West Indian island, and she left it, in company with the future Empress, to complete her education in a convent at Nantes. At

The French Sultaness.

* The fez cap is of Byzantine origin. It was adopted by the Turks after the siege of 1453. They wound their turbans round it in sign of conquest.

the age of seventeen, and possibly because the Revolution had closed this religious house, she embarked, at Marseilles, for her home in the tropics. The vessel was captured by Algerian pirates, and the lovely French girl was offered for sale in the public slave-market of Algiers. She was purchased by the Dey, and conveyed to Constantinople as a present to Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid I. The son she bore him became Mahmūd II., who, in his turn, was the grandfather of the present Sultan. When the Empress Eugénie was at Constantinople, she made inquiries concerning this lady, but received scant information. Mademoiselle Dubuc de Rivéry, who was subsequently known as Naschedil-Sultan, must have received some education, and having been a witness of the stirring events which marked the last decade of the eighteenth century in France, was probably imbued with some of the liberal ideas with which she inspired the Sultan, her son. Whether she ever became a Mohammedan is not known. Probably, she was too old, when she came to Constantinople, to embrace Islāmism with any conviction, and she may have simply kept her Christian faith a profound secret. I have seen it stated, in some old French despatches, that Mahmūd, when he chose, could speak good French, and that he was acquainted with the literature of his mother's country. At any rate, we may surmise, and probably with some correctness, that his mind was considerably influenced by this Princess, who lived almost to the end of his reign, and who is buried in one of the Imperial Turbhé, in the neighbourhood of the fine Mosque of

Sultan Mohammed II., and close to her granddaughter, Adeleh Sultan, an imperious but liberal-minded Princess, who had a considerable share in the reform movement under Abd-ul-Medjid.

Journalism introduced.

In 1795, under Sultan Selim III., the first attempt was made to publish a newspaper in Constantinople. M. Verninac, the Plenipotentiary of the French Republic, endeavoured to obtain circulation for a weekly newspaper, but the publication soon failed, from lack of public support, although the Sultan is said to have had it translated and read to him. In 1811 another paper, entitled *Le Spectateur d'Orient*, appeared, and was presently merged into the *Courier de Smyrne*, which eventually, in the hands of M. Alexander Blacque, became both flourishing and influential. Sultan Mahmūd II. summoned M. Blacque to Constantinople to found yet another important paper, *Le Moniteur Ottomane*, which in due time became the official organ. In May, 1832, appeared the first Turkish paper, the *Tagvimi vogai*, or Diary of Events. In 1838 the *Echo d'Orient* was published, and a little later, *Le Journal de Smyrne*, which is still in existence. The Italians published their first local organ in 1850, *Il Corriere Bisantino*, and in less than three years every nationality of any importance represented in Constantinople had its own organ. There are now, I believe, over one hundred and thirty Turkish papers published in the Empire, and about as many more in various languages. The oldest English paper published in the Turkish capital is *The Levant Herald*, now very cleverly edited by

Mr. Whittaker, whose hospitality in Pera is as well known as it is warmly appreciated. The censorship under the present Sultan has quite paralysed journalism, and the newspaper men, to avoid fine and even imprisonment, are obliged to refrain from mentioning political events, and to confine themselves to social and commercial topics.

For centuries the Sublime Porte only sent Envoys to Mohammedan Courts, those to Persia being notably important. This exclusiveness was simply the result of the astounding pride (vanity?) of the Ottomans, who believed the Christian Powers, ignorant of the Koran, to be unworthy of a true believer's attention. As they approached Europe, however, and especially after the taking of Constantinople, they were forced to change this opinion, and re-established the interrupted official communications with the Western Powers, on lines traced by the Byzantines. The first foreign Embassies to be reorganised were the Venetian and the Genoese, but notwithstanding the close commercial relations which existed between Stambul and the capitals of the two great Italian republics, no resident Turkish mission was sent either to Venice or Genoa, important as those cities were. The first Turkish Ambassador ever sent to reside at a European Court was Mohammed Effendi, who, in 1712, appeared in Paris, for a short time, during the minority of Louis XV. as the representative of the Sultan. Early in the summer of 1750, Dervish Pasha represented the Ottoman Empire for some months at the Court of St. Petersburg. In the winter of the same year, Mohammed Agha arrived

Establishment of Diplomatic relations.

at Warsaw as Envoy to the King of Poland, with a special message from the Sultan. The advent, in 1791, in the midst of the Reign of Terror, of Dari Effendi and a numerous suite, in full Oriental costume, as Ambassador from Sultan Selim III., created a great stir in Paris, and the event is mentioned in many memoirs of the period. The frontispiece to this volume is from an engraving by D'Orme, after a picture by Browne, representing George III. receiving the first Turkish Ambassador to England, and his suite. Lord Salisbury, Mr. Pitt, and Lord Granville are in attendance on the King. Mavrudi Effendi, the Ottoman Ambassador, wears a Turkish costume, a huge turban and a caftan of rich brocade, lined with fur. Dervish Effendi, the First Secretary, and the interpreter are also in attendance, dressed in Eastern fashion. The picture was painted in 1795, the year when permanent Turkish Ambassadors were first accredited to certain foreign Courts in Europe — Paris, London, and Berlin. Mavrudi Effendi's London residence was in Portman Square, and it became the fashion to go and stare at him whenever he went into the garden to enjoy the air, crowds assembling round the railings to get a peep at him. The Russian Government declined the honour of a Turkish Embassy, and the other missions were, unfortunately, not successful. The Old Turkish party intrigued for the recall of the Ambassadors, fearing that their orthodoxy might be contaminated by a prolonged stay among the Giaours. In 1833 Sultan Mahmūd reorganised the Ambassadorial and Consular

service of his Empire with complete success, and since that time Turkey has been represented at every European Court, at Washington also, and in several of the South American Republics. On the other hand, as the Ottomans, on their arrival at Constantinople, found European Embassies already established, they gradually adopted the Byzantine custom, and, by degrees, allowed the re-establishment in Stambul of a Diplomatic Corps, which, so far as England and France were concerned, has been rarely interrupted since the close of the fifteenth century. Among the more distinguished of our own Ambassadors have been Sir Edward Harborn; Sir Edward Barton, who represented Queen Elizabeth at the Courts of Murād III. and Mohammed III.; Sir Richard Glover, representing James I. and Charles I. at the Turkish Court; Sir Roger Howe, who had the task of informing the Sultan of the execution of Charles I., which brought forth from the Commander of the Faithful an outburst of fury against "people who had ventured to lay hands on God's anointed"; and the Earl of Winchilsea, whose secretary, Paul Rycaut, was the author of several most interesting works on Turkey. Early in the eighteenth century we were represented by Mr. Wortley Montagu, whose accomplished wife has added lustre to her husband's residence in Constantinople by her vivacious letters, and who conferred a lasting benefit on humanity by the introduction of inoculation as a preventive of small-pox, a system superseded in due time by that of vaccination.

XI.

I need not recapitulate the extraordinary events of Mahmūd's reign; the revolutionary episodes, and massacres which led, eventually, to the independence of Greece, and the revolt of Mehemet Ali in 1832, resulting in the partial severance of Egypt from Turkey. It is as a reformer that we must consider him, and in this quality his name should be as honoured as is that of Peter the Great in Russia. In the first fifteen years of his reign he worked slowly, biding his time, and it was not till 1826 that an opportunity occurred for him to put his great projects into execution. Among the first and most important of his reforms was the reorganisation of the Turkish Army on the European system. This, he knew perfectly well, could not be done until the Janissaries were either entirely subjugated or else destroyed. They had, by this time, reached a condition of extreme disorganisation.* The Treasury being fairly exhausted—the troops were paid very irregularly during the first quarter of the present century, and were therefore more or less driven to pillage for their support—matters had reached such a pass that, when a Janissary went through the bazaar, he helped himself to whatever he wanted, and no one dared to interfere. Occasionally they would set fire to

The Greek Revolution and Independence. Severance of Egypt from Turkey.

* In 1824 the Servians had presented a petition to the Sultan, complaining of the hideous cruelties to which they had been subjected by the Janissaries, which produced a profound impression on His Majesty's mind, without, however, resulting in any immediate benefit to the wretched Servians.

a group of houses, simply for the sake of probable plunder. They were no longer an organised body-guard, but a horde of bandits. Public opinion was strongly against them, and even the Mollahs and Ulemās soon began to abandon their cause. The Sultan, perceiving that they were ever plotting against him, consulted the Sheikh-ul-Islām, and obtained his consent to a ghastly scheme. On the morning of the 1st of June, 1826, the Janissaries showed symptoms of open revolt, and, during their exercises on the Square of At'-Meidan, several of them began to shout "Death to the Giaour Sultan!" These were arrested, but almost immediately released, after a brief examination. On the 16th, the Sultan, wearing his Egyptian uniform and head-dress, came over from Bechitach, and hastened to the Seraglio, where he was received with enthusiasm by the Doctors of Law and the students of the various Medrassés. Unfolding the green standard of the Prophet, he called upon the people to rise, and defend themselves against their bitterest enemies. The Janissaries unflinchingly prepared for resistance. Meanwhile, arms and ammunition were distributed to the people, who rushed to the Mosque of Achmet, shouting "Allah Akbar! Allah Akbar!" Then the battle began in earnest, the Mollahs, Ulemās, and Softas joined the fray, and in a few hours the whole of Stambul was up in arms. The barracks of the Janissaries, behind the mosque of Sultan Achmet, were blown up, and many hundreds perished. Later on in the day, a hand-to-hand fight occurred, and the doomed wretches were murdered almost to a man—even in the cellars, where

Destruction of the Janissaries.

some of their friends tried to hide them, and in the great cistern of the Thousand and One Columns, where many of them had vainly sought refuge. The number of killed is estimated as being between 10,000 and 20,000. Such of the corpses as were not burnt in the fires, which blazed in all directions, were cast into the sea, and for many months "fish in Constantinople was not eatable." It was a terrible, a radical, perhaps an absolutely necessary measure, if the power of the once mighty Guard was to be broken at all. This bloody event was followed by another of almost equal importance and significance—the formal abolition of the Orders of Dervishes, notably of the Bektāshee Dervishes, who, as I have already intimated, were not strictly orthodox, but who had always fraternised with the Janissaries, and were therefore specially odious in the eyes of the Sultan. The chiefs of this Order of Dervishes were decapitated, and its more prominent members were banished to the furthest ends of the Empire. The Sultan then turned his attention to that very numerous class in any Oriental city, the vagabonds, so quaintly described by the Turks as "people without fire or roof." Some 20,000 of them were exiled, not a few to Bulgaria, others to the confines of Persia.

Abolition of the Dervishes.

Sultan Mahmūd not only reorganised his army, but his navy, and he finally turned his attention to the all-important question of education, and established, at his own expense, a Naval and a Military College, on the lines of the best establishments of the sort known in Europe. He published an official paper in the

Education.

Turkish language. He created an Order of Merit, the *Nichaniftkar*, to be awarded to Mohammedans and Christians indiscriminately. He permitted steamboats on the Bosphorus, and ordered the establishment of quarantines and lazarets as some precaution against the plague. He overthrew that system of isolation in which the Ottoman Empire had hitherto maintained itself, and accredited Ambassadors to all the Courts of Europe. He even went so far as to violate the prescriptions of the Koran by causing the coin of the realm to be stamped with his effigy, and he had all the barracks throughout the country placarded with engravings representing his sacred person. The Eastern world was shaken to its depths by innovations of such an extraordinary character, and when the Sultan gave a ball, to which the wives of the various Ambassadors and European officials were invited, the holy frenzy of the bigoted Moslims knew no bounds. Insurrections occurred, simultaneously, in all parts of the Empire; but the Sultan was equal to the occasion, and very soon put them down. Perhaps the most terrible of these manifestations of fanatical ill-will, was the fire which burnt down the greater part of Pera in 1827; 10,000 houses were destroyed. Mahmūd now issued a proclamation, announcing that he was absolutely determined to carry out his reforms, and that opposition to his will meant death. The Mollahs answered by assembling, in their thousands, in the squares in front of the principal mosques of Stambul, and shouting "Death to the heretic Pādishāh." Once more the Sultan replied, in his charac-

Isolation of Turkey under the old system.

Insurrection of the Dervishes.

teristic fashion, and 4,000 dead bodies were cast into the sea. Amongst a very large number of his subjects, opposition to his will came to be looked upon as a sort of martyrdom. One day a Dervish named Sheikh-Satchili, whom the people held to be a saint, met the Sultan on the bridge which unites Stambul to Galata, and, seizing the bridle of his horse, cried out, "Giaour Pādishāh, are you not satiated with your abominations? You are ruining Islām; you will bring down the malediction of the Prophet upon us!" The officers of the Sultan's suite tried to drive the man away, saying, "Your Majesty, he is a madman!" "I am not mad!" cried the Dervish with indignation. "It is thou, O Giaour Pādishāh, who art mad! God speaks through me, and He has promised me the crown of martyrdom if I speak truly to you!" "Very well, then," answered the Sultan, "so be it!" and turning to an officer of his suite, he exclaimed, "Give the good man his crown of glory! Hang him!"

Mahmūd visits his provinces.

The better to ascertain the real condition of his European provinces, Sultan Mahmūd, not content with hearing reports, visited them in person, and carefully examined into matters. He received the archbishops and bishops of the various Christian sects, and even the Jewish Rabbis, with the greatest courtesy, inspected their schools, and rewarded the cleverer scholars with gifts in money and kind. Everywhere he was acclaimed with the utmost enthusiasm. On his return to Constantinople, in 1837, he completed the glory of his reign by establishing Courts of Justice on the European system, independent of any direct influence from Koran or Mollahs.

XII.

Lord Stratford de Redcliffe's estimate of Mahmūd II.

Our great Ambassador, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, had, it is understood, begun by disliking this remarkable Sultan. He could not divest himself of the feeling of horror with which the massacre of the Janissaries had inspired him; but the splendid force of character of His Majesty ended by winning the respect, and, eventually, the friendship, of one who had originally distrusted him. He willingly extended his helping hand to assist the Sultan in his efforts at reform, and he concluded, finally, that when all things were taken into consideration, the resolute blow dealt to the baneful tyranny of the Janissaries, bloody though it might have been, was likely to be the birthday of modern Turkey. "Such resolution, such immovable firmness, such patience, are rare among princes; and though strength of will, in Mahmūd's case, carried with it an unpleasing rigidity, and, in religious matters, a quality of fanaticism, there is no doubt that he had the ability, as well as the desire, to revive the ancient lustre of his house by bringing into it some glimmer of Western civilisation."

The character of Sultan Mahmūd.

Sultan Mahmūd was not a man of broad views or of great experience; but he saw the obvious necessities of his Government, and recognised that the disorderly multitude which had hitherto been looked upon as the "army" in Turkey must be powerless against even the smallest of the well-disciplined and well-equipped military forces of modern Europe. He was, probably, in advance of his age, and did not recognise the

supreme difficulties of attempting to reform a people whose intellectual and moral growth was cramped by its religious system. He was, moreover, friendless, and stood alone, as, indeed, does his successor and grandson, Abd-ul-Hamid II. Then, as now, Christian Powers refused, from interested motives, to stretch forth a hand to help the Sultan in carrying out his wise projects. Russia was afraid her prey might escape her; England and France outraged the national feelings of the Ottoman Sultan by joining in the Czar's demand for the dismemberment of his Empire for the sake of the Greek Kingdom. The Powers stood by whilst Russia made wanton war upon him, they so tied his hands, by treaty, that he could not defend himself, and they consummated this act of treachery by sending his fleet to the bottom of the sea at Navarino. Humiliated, crushed, heart-broken, the Sultan, who might have saved Turkey, who had extended a hand of the sincerest friendship to England, welcomed death, so that his eyes might not witness the further dissolution of his Empire.

Lord Stratford de Redcliffe as British Ambassador.

It is strange, indeed, to reflect upon the amazing chance which slipped through our hands owing to the persistent disregard by the officials at the London Foreign Office of the advice and opinion of our Ambassador at Constantinople. Canning's one cry was that we should stand the friend, in all sincerity and firmness, of the Sultan. The Foreign Office betrayed him, and from that hour to this we have never fully regained our influence in the East. Recent events must have proved, even to the most careless,

how completely we have lost our *prestige* in that capital and Empire where once we ruled well-nigh as supreme as the Khaliph himself. Never have the interests of our Embassy been so firmly represented as by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. He had every possible attribute for the position, a fine presence, dignity of manner, and a sympathetic and comprehensive intelligence. He fully understood that whilst the Oriental mind must be captivated by outward appearance, it is of too subtle a nature to be deceived by external pomp alone, and must be inspired not with respect only, but with fear. Few Ambassadors, too, have ever had a finer staff. It included such men as Lord Strangford, Lord Stanley of Alderley, Lord Napier and Ettrick, Robert Curzon (Lord Zouche), Lord Cowley, Odo Russell (Lord Ampthill), Sir John Drummond Hay, and such invaluable public servants as Layard, Rawlinson, and Newton. Turkey, in Canning's eyes, was a barrier against Russia, the door-keeper of the Dardanelles. Since his day we have never been so completely represented. Lord Ponsonby, who, in 1839, signed the first treaty between Turkey and ourselves, was a very able man. In Lord Dufferin we had an Ambassador who knew how to dazzle, and in Layard an Ambassador who knew how to charm. Sir William White understood the East thoroughly, but was too apt to see things through German spectacles. In Sir Philip Currie we have an astute diplomat, and a delightful gentleman, but he was handicapped, on his arrival in Turkey, by his lack of practical and personal knowledge of the country. He

had never even visited Constantinople, and it takes many months, if not years, to thoroughly understand the truth concerning a capital and country in which everything is exactly what it does not appear to be. Then again, with all the goodwill in the world, combined with the wisdom of Solomon, no Ambassador can make his mark in Turkey unless he has a free hand, the loyal support of his Government, and, above all, in an age like ours, that of the press at home. I much doubt that Sir Philip Currie has had all these. He has been placed in a false position. The press has clamoured for action, nay, even for immediate action, on the part of our Government—in the Armenian matter—without the least chance of its outcry being heeded. The Ambassador's task has, therefore, been limited to endeavouring to convince the Sultan, who is singularly astute, that England is his best friend, in spite of the outcry of the numerous newspapers, which have never ceased to vilify him. Impunity has encouraged Abd-ul-Hamid in his senseless policy, and he has actually relapsed into barbarism. His is a case of double atavism. He has reverted back in his first phase to Mahmūd the Reformer, and in his second to Selim the Cruel.

Sir Philip Currie.

XIII.

The change in the national costume which marked the reign of Mahmūd II., was not an æsthetic success. The Sultan evidently imagined it impossible for his people to assimilate with Europeans, and become imbued with their civilisation,

unless they cast aside the comfortable and picturesque dress of the East, for the inconvenient and hideous garb of the West. In this he was mistaken, for even as the habit does not make the monk, so a frock-coat, a pair of trousers, and sidespring boots do not constitute the civilised European. But the change was gradual, and it was not until after the Crimean War that the wearing of European garments became general, and that Constantinople and the more important cities of the Empire lost the picturesqueness they can never now recover. Even so late as 1856, Théophile Gautier, in his delightful work on Constantinople, assures us that the streets of that city always reminded him of a brilliant open-air Bal d'Opéra, so great was the variety, and so rich the harmonious colouring, of the costumes worn by all classes of the people. Sultan Mahmūd, however, ordered that whereas all his subjects might doff the turban, they must, to distinguish them from the foreigners residing in the Empire, adopt the fez, which is not only a very ugly but in many ways a very dangerous head-dress, offering no protection whatever from the snows and rains of winter, or from the intense glare of the sun in summer.

The Europeanising of Turkey.

XIV.

Sultan Abd-ul-Medjid, the eldest son of Mahmūd, succeeded him, and continued his schemes for reform, with more or less success. He was naturally gentle and humane, so much so, indeed, that he has won for himself the popular surname of the "Gentlest of Sultans." At his accession Turkey was divided into

Abd-ul-Medjid's reforms.

two distinct parties: a liberal one, which desired to see the reforms introduced by Sultan Mahmūd firmly established and further developed; the other, the retrograde or fanatical party—numerically by far the more important of the two—was bent upon destroying the great work of the late Sultan, by well-organised appeals to the prejudices and violent passions of the lower orders; it eventually succeeded in rousing them to frenzy, and brought about terrible massacres of Christians in various parts of Asia, notably at Djedda and Damascus.

Just outside the southern corner of the inner wall of the old Seraglio, is a half-round kiosk, of no striking architectural beauty, but of great interest in the history of reform in Turkey. It is popularly known as the Gul Khaneh Kiosk, and gives its name to a very famous Tanzimat or Hattī Sherīf (*i.e.* august proclamation) issued in 1839 by Sultan Abd-ul-Medjid. Unhappily, it was drawn up by the enthusiastic Reshid Pasha, and being altogether too sweeping and premature in its scope, offended the Old Turkish party. It induced not only the overthrow of Reshid himself, but a very dangerous reaction in Turkey. Its effect in Europe, however, was amazing. It may be said to correspond, as a sensational episode, with the proclamation of a liberal constitution, two years later, by Pope Pius IX., and is another proof—if proof were wanted—of the extension, even in the East, of the revolutionary movement, which culminated in the outbreak of 1848. The document commences, rather boldly, by declaring that the decline of the Ottoman Empire

The Hattī Sherīf of Gul Khaneh.

is mainly due to the disregard of justice and law during the last two hundred and fifty years. It invokes the help of Allah and His Prophet, and aims at introducing security of life—equality before the tribunals, regardless of rank and creed—protection of property—uniformity of taxation—of conscription —and of military service. Liberty of conscience and freedom of worship were also granted, and the civil service was thrown open to Christians of all denominations. Doubtless, Sultan Abd-ul-Medjid's motive in signing this important document was sincere, and he hoped thereby to show his determination to continue in his father's footsteps, and even to surpass him in liberality. His Hatti Sherif was read out by Reshid Pasha, in the Sultan's name, and in the presence of a most imposing assemblage, which included not only the ambassadors, but the Sheikh-ul-Islām, the Greek, Armenian, and Catholic Patriarchs, and the Chief Rabbi. Amongst those who were present was Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who, although hopeful, was nevertheless prepared for possible, and even probable, disappointment.

XV.

The proclamation was received by the Mussulmans in silence, and by the Christians with incredulity. The reaction against it was immediate. Reshid Pasha's fall ensued within a few months, and the new Grand Vizir, Raüf Pasha, Sarim Effendi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Riza Pasha, who, though extreme reactionists, had been boon companions of the late

The proclamation badly received.

Sultan, now availed themselves of their present ruler's youth and inexperience, and played upon his fears. In a very short time the famous Hattï Sherïf had dwindled to a mere historical curiosity. Riza, whose eventual downfall was mainly prepared by Canning, carried his hatred of the Christians to such an extent that he desired to see them excluded from all public offices, and along with them, such Turks as spoke Christian languages. Presently matters reached such a pass, that Christian evidence was no longer accepted anywhere against Moslim. Christians were insulted when they moved about Stambul, and the excellent intentions of the Gul Khaneh Hattï Sherïf became a dead letter.

Meanwhile the improvement in the education of the native Christians, coupled with the insistence of the Powers, brought about a counter-reaction which, owing mainly to the alliances necessitated by the Crimean campaign whereby Turkey became the sister of France, Sardinia, and England, created a sort of condition of involuntary toleration, especially in Constantinople. This, for a time, at least, effaced the unfortunate impression caused by the violent reaction to which I have just alluded.

XVI.

During the war of 1854–5, the Christian population of the capital was left pretty much to its own devices, and everything English was received with enthusiasm by a large section of the people, although the Old Turkish party was bitterly opposed to the alliance of

Turkey with the Christian Powers, and especially with what they were pleased to call the invasion of Giaours which was its consequence. The Crimean War, however popular it may have rendered us with certain of the more enlightened Turks, was far from being approved by the Old Turkish party. Wounded in its vanity by the manifest superiority of the allies, it believed that England, France, and Sardinia, although their soldiers fought side by side with the Turks, and acknowledged the bravery of the Mohammedan soldiers, nevertheless looked upon Turkey as "the sick man," and were disposed, in a sense, to patronise an Empire proud of the immediate protection of Allah and His Prophet. At the same time, the prolonged sojourn of European officers and soldiers in Constantinople, effected a change in the manners and ideas of its inhabitants; and it became the fashion, not only among the men, but also among the women of the upper classes of Turkish society, to Europeanise themselves as much as possible.

Unpopularity of the Crimean War.

Abd-ul-Medjid died on June 25th, 1861, and although he had been the object of many conspiracies, he was sincerely regretted by his people, and by the European colony. English influence reached its zenith under this Sultan, and those halcyon days have never returned.

On the day following the death of Abd-ul-Medjid, his brother, Abd-ul-Aziz, was proclaimed Sultan. He found the treasury almost empty, so great had been the extravagance of his predecessor, who had not hesitated to spend £2,000,000 sterling on the occasion

Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz.

of the marriage of his eldest daughter with Ali Galib. The new Sultan's first act gave immense satisfaction. He addressed a Fetwa to the Grand Vizir, promising to continue the reforms introduced by his two predecessors, and granting a universal amnesty to political offenders. He even went so far as to allow it to be publicly announced that he intended to have but one wife. Thanks to the energy of the celebrated Fuad Pasha, a Commission, including several respectable Europeans, was formed, to examine into the financial state of the Empire, which, needless to say, was found to be in a hopeless condition. Unpleasing revelations were soon made as to wholesale robbery on the part of the highest officials, and as to a tyrannical system of illegal exactions from the poor, and especially from the Christian poor.

Result of the Commission.

The labours of this Commission resulted in two remarkable institutions—the Imperial Ottoman Bank, and the Dette Publique, partially controlled by Europeans. Railway concessions were granted, a line was opened between Varna and Rustchuk, and a high-road laid down between Trebizond and Erzeroum. The Danube Delta was handed over to a syndicate of European concessionists, and, all things considered, a great deal was done to improve the condition of the country.

Abd-ul-Aziz at first displayed exceptional aptitude for government, especially when influenced by Fuad and Ali Pashas, two of the most competent statesmen Turkey has produced during this century. But, although he was intelligent, the cloistered seclusion to

which, in accordance with Oriental etiquette, he had been relegated during his father's reign, had its inevitable effect, and he presently developed an inordinate love for the relaxations of the Hareem, from which even his European tour failed to rouse him. Meanwhile a party—originally created, not, as is usually stated, by Midhat Pasha, but by the Egyptian Prince Mustaphā Fazil, who was banished in consequence—rose in Constantinople, under the name of the "Young Turkey Party." This party understood progress in a less liberal sense than its title would lead us to think, its original object being the government of Turkey by the Turks, rather than the introduction of general reforms into the Ottoman Administration. Its adherents hoped to govern after the European fashion, but without the intervention of foreign advice or influence. When, therefore, the Sultan and his nephews, Murād and Abd-ul-Hamid, who had been allowed to accompany His Majesty abroad, returned to Constantinople, the "Young Turkey" party hoped the Pādishāh, inspired by what he had seen in Europe, would formally place himself at their head. Unfortunately, all Abd-ul-Aziz brought back with him from Paris and London was a confused recollection of broad streets, and squares, and lofty houses gaily decorated in his honour. He had seen little or nothing of European civilisation save the brilliant pageants organised to captivate his imagination. He, consequently, devoted himself on his return not so much to the reform of his Administration, as to the rearrangement of his Court and Palaces, after the models

Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz's visit to Europe.

he had seen in Paris and London.* The deaths of Fuad and Ali Pashas, which occurred within a short time of each other, left him uncontrolled, and he soon began, with the assistance of the unscrupulous Grand Vizir, Mahmūd Neddin Pasha, to indulge in such wanton extravagance, that the country was declared bankrupt on October 6th, 1875. A few days later Mahmūd Neddin was overthrown by a demonstration on the part of the Softas. The new Grand Vizir, Mehmed Reschid Pasha, conceived and matured a plot for the deposition of the incompetent and spendthrift Sultan, who had already given signs of hereditary insanity, and to this end he obtained the co-operation of Midhat Pasha; Hussein Avni Pasha, Minister of War; Raschid Pasha, Minister of Foreign Affairs; the President of the Grand Council of War; Kaissarli Achmet Pasha, Minister of Marine; Suleymān Pasha; and Nedjib Pasha. The conspirators had won the assent of the Sheikh-ul-Islām, Hassan Hairullah. The details of this most dramatic and tragic conspiracy, closing as it did in the violent death of the Sultan, have been related, with more or less accuracy, again and again. Midhat Pasha, in placing Murād V., the eldest nephew of the deposed Sultan, on the throne, had a special object in view. He had long before obtained from this Prince a solemn undertaking that, if he became Khaliph, he would proclaim a Constitu-

The conspiracy against Abd-ul-Aziz.

* It may be interesting to remark that during Abd-ul-Aziz's stay in London, Her Majesty honoured him with the Order of the Garter, and he, to acknowledge the compliment, created his Ambassador in London, M. Musurus, the first Christian Pasha.

tion, more or less on the lines of those which had proved successful in Western Europe. This was now the aim and object of the "Young Turkey" party, which by degrees had enlarged its field of political vision. By this stroke of policy Midhat secured the Pādishāh as head of the party, of which he himself was prime mover. On paper at least this Constitution leaves nothing to be desired, and if it had been maintained, Turkey would at this present moment be as free a country as England or the United States.

This Charter of Turkish liberties includes some startling clauses, as, for instance, the indivisibility of the Empire; the irresponsibility of the Sultan; the equality of all citizens, irrespective of nationality and creed, before the law, and their right to elect and be elected; freedom of worship, of education, and of the press; abolition of torture; inviolability of domicile; reform of taxes; a Constitution, in a word, based on the best models. The Parliament was divided into two Houses—a Senate and a House of Commons. The Senators were elected for life, and the Deputies for five years; each representing 50,000 Ottoman subjects of the male sex. The Sultan, by virtue of Article 44, reserved to himself the right of closing both Houses at his pleasure. Such a programme was not likely to be favoured by the Old Turkish party. It is, however, incorrect to imagine that the first Turkish Parliament, notwithstanding the many difficulties it had to contend with, was a failure. It was, on the contrary, fairly successful. True, the elections were not as regular as might have been desirable, and

The first Turkish Parliament.

many of the members, having no experience whatever of Parliamentary life, were at first amusingly awkward. The Mohammedan members, strange to relate, were by far the most eloquent, and also the most ardent advocates of reform. It must have been a singular and inspiring sight, to see the honourable member for Jerusalem in earnest conversation with the gentleman who represented Baghdad, endeavouring to secure his co-operation in promoting certain reforms, well calculated to make the very coffin of the Prophet flee in protest up to Heaven, from its suspended position in the sacred mosque of Mecca.

XVII.

Death of Abd-ul-Aziz.

The death of Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz was followed by a series of terrific tragedies, which no doubt affected the already vacillating brain of Murād, and, three months after his accession, he showed such evident symptoms of insanity, that his removal from the throne became imperative. His next brother, Abd-ul-Hamid II., was called from his seclusion, and proclaimed Khaliph in his stead. He solemnly swore to maintain the Constitution, and, for a few weeks, he was the idol, not only of the "Young Turkey" party, but of the people at large. By nature high-strung and nervous, he constituted himself, almost immediately upon his succession, and on pretext of protecting himself from possible assassination, a voluntary prisoner, in the Palace of Yildiz Kiosk, and has never left it, save on one or two rare occasions, since his investiture with the sword of

Abd-ul-Hamid ascends the throne.

Othmān in 1876. In a few months he began to reveal himself, and to show signs of his determination to overthrow a Constitution which so greatly diminished his supreme authority. He worked with singular astuteness. For two years he lay low, never, for a single moment, losing sight of his great object, to abrogate the offending Constitution, and rid himself of Midhat and the rest of the conspirators, to whom he really owed his throne. For this purpose an extraordinary story was concocted, alleging that the real assassins of Aziz had been discovered. They were said to be a gardener and a Greek wrestler, whom Midhat and his confederates had bribed to murder the Sultan. What may be fairly called a mock trial ensued, and resulted in the condemnation of Midhat and his friends, including the Sheikh-ul-Islām. All were forthwith banished to Tāaf, a fortress in the vicinity of Mecca. Such a sentence was palpably unequal to the enormity of the offence, if proved, and the affair would strike the ordinary observer as being suspiciously like a tragic farce, cleverly imagined by the Sultan and his advisers, as a pretext for withdrawing the Constitution, and delivering himself from those whom he chose to consider his worst enemies. Banishment to Tāaf meant death, for in course of time the unfortunate prisoners passed mysteriously out of the world; all, at least, but one, Sheikh-ul-Islām Hairullah, who is said to be still living on in solitary confinement.

The Sultan's counterplot.

The political situation of Turkey, when Abd-ul-Hamid became Sultan, was most critical. The Empire

was in revolt, the finances ruined, the commerce nearly destroyed by the Turco-Russian war, which had already begun. Bosnia and Herzegovina were in flames, Bulgaria at her last gasp; Montenegro and Servia had boldly declared their intention to perish sooner than continue under Turkish misrule. Europe was hostile, and Russia only waited an opportunity to seize her coveted prey.

XVIII.

The Russo-Turkish war.

As all the world knows, the great feature of the Russo-Turkish War was the defence of Plevna by Osman Pasha. Preliminaries of peace were signed at Adrianople literally at the point of the bayonet. On March 3rd the Treaty of San Stefano was concluded in the presence of the Russian army, encamped on the shores of the Sea of Marmara, and already eagerly discussing the prospect of entering Constantinople, whose domes and minarets were in sight. The conditions imposed were, however, of so damaging a nature, that the interference of England was necessary, and in June, 1878, the Treaty of Berlin abrogated that of San Stefano. This treaty records the partial dismemberment of Turkey; Servia, Montenegro, and Roumania were declared independent. Bulgaria was divided into two parts—one autonomous, the other governed by the Porte. Thessaly was apportioned to Greece. Russia regained the strip of Bessarabia taken from her in 1856, and retained, moreover, her conquests in Asia—Kars, Batoum, and Ardahan. England, in return for her acquiescence in these

arrangements, took possession of the island of Cyprus, which she holds in fee of the Sultan.

Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid was thus compelled to witness the most serious encroachments upon his Empire which had hitherto taken place. It is not at all improbable that the results of the war might have been less disastrous for Turkey had His Majesty consented to leave military matters in the hands of his generals. His constant interference hampered their movements, and usually resulted in their recall, and the appointment of others of less experience. On more than one occasion his generals announced their intention of throwing up their commands, unless His Majesty left them alone. At the most critical period of the war, when the fate of Turkey was literally in the hands of Fuad Pasha, after the defeat of the Russians at Elena, the Sultan ruined the situation by telegraphing to his victorious general to await further orders. Had Fuad continued his march, the Russians would undoubtedly have re-crossed the Danube, and the ultimate outcome of the war might have been very different. When the Russians were at San Stefano, and the Grand Duke Nicholas was making preparations to enter the capital, where the Greek priests were actually ready to sing High Mass in Sancta Sophia, the Sultan was advised to retire to Brusa. But he was sagacious enough to refuse even to cross the Bosphorus to the Palace of Beylerbey, on the Asiatic side, recognising that, if he did so, he would probably never be allowed to return to Europe.

XIX.

Reform under Abd-ul-Hamid II.

It would be extremely unjust to deny that the present Sultan has done a very great deal for the improvement of his Empire. Some extraordinary changes have been effected. Railways have increased. The Oriental Express now runs in three days from Paris and London, bringing many travellers, who usually spend some time and money in Constantinople before dispersing themselves to other places of interest. The Orient Express has not, however, been of benefit to trade in general. This has diminished exceedingly since the loss of Servia and Bulgaria. Formerly Constantinople was the principal market for Eastern Europe, but since the proclamation of the independence of these former provinces, the commercial centre has been translated to Pesth. Education has been stimulated by His Majesty, who has spent enormous sums out of his privy purse for this object. The results, however, have not been so great as might have been expected, owing partly to the lack of proper teachers. It takes several generations to create good professors. The censorship interferes in the most ludicrous and narrow-minded manner with the school books, erasing whole pages, simply because they are considered revolutionary or contrary to the teaching of the Koran.

Education.

XX.

The future of Turkey may well be said to be in the hands of God. So far as human foresight is

concerned, it is absolutely impossible to tell what may happen next in this extraordinary Empire. Will it, impelled by some tremendous movement in the Mohammedan world, suddenly, and at a bound, return to its primitive condition? Or will the fetters of centuries of superstition and ignorance be for ever cast aside, and the great natural intelligence and ability of the peoples of the East shine forth with all that brilliance of which, under proper conditions, they are capable? It is certain that this happy result will never take place so long as the Supreme Ruler of so many millions of men spends his youth secluded from all intercourse with the outer world, in utter ignorance of every contemporary event.

The Ottoman Empire is either on the eve of a great transformation, or on the threshold of absolute ruin. It may, as I have said, retrograde, or, with the consent of the Western Powers, continue for some few years longer in its actual semi-fossil condition, or it may collapse at any moment. A year or so ago, Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid appeared to be earnestly striving, against cruel odds, to do what was best for his people. But recent events demand a change of opinion. The good he has done is drowned—drowned in the blood of countless murdered men, women, and children, and, in the lurid light of these scenes of horror, he takes on the semblance of some loathsome spider, caught in the silken web of his own Hareem, and condemned there to re-incarnate the most evil of his ancestors, whose very names conjure up dread memories of murder and of rapine. It may be, indeed, that his good intentions

have proved too heavy for him, and that, like those of many another honest man, they have fallen into the depths of Hell to add flagstones to its red-hot pavements. But be this as it may, what can be said of the Christian nations who have stood by in selfish apathy, or something near it, and watched the wholesale butchery which has now reigned for nearly two years, unchallenged by the European Powers, whose deplorably egotistical policy must appear as feeble and undignified to the Moslim world, as the barbarous cruelty of the Sultan's henchmen is revolting to ours? Surely we must account ourselves well-nigh as blameworthy for these horrors as Abd-ul-Hamid himself! We deluded the luckless Armenians by our unsteady policy, and after all the tall talk of our newspapers, and the shrieks of our public meetings, we have not saved a single Armenian child from a terrible death.

Unfortunately, Abd-ul-Hamid, by concentrating the reins of government in his own hands, has brought two dreadful curses on his own dominions: a system of espionage which renders life unendurable for any one in the least connected with politics; and a censorship, the silliness of which baffles all belief. The spy system is sapping the foundations of the Empire, even demoralising otherwise honourable men. It is one of the indirect causes of the troubles in Armenia and other parts of the Empire. If a man is paid to spy upon his neighbours, you may be certain that, when he has nothing to report, he will invent, and thus many an Armenian has been dragged to jail,

simply because the idle hands of some official spy had no other work to do. I firmly believe the childish obstacles thrown in the way of honourable newspaper correspondents—who earnestly wish to be just, and to give accurate news to the papers they represent—to be one of the reasons for the earlier and exaggerated reports which appeared about Armenian atrocities, and which, being cunningly translated into Turkish to inflame the fanaticism of the Mohammedans, have had not a little to do with their terrible sequence.

Abd-ul-Hamid, after all, has much to contend with. The old Oriental spirit has by no means passed away, and the reforms have, so far, only influenced the capital and the larger cities, and even these but superficially. Fanaticism is still rampant, and Yildiz, like the Seraglio of the "good old times," contains all the *dramatis personæ* of the tales of Shahrazad, Pashas, eunuchs, Mollahs, Beys, astrologers, slaves, Sultanas, Kadinés, dancing-women, Circassian and Georgian odalisques, whose one and perpetual object is self-advancement. Above this swarming ant-hill of picturesque figures, the Sultan stands out in striking relief. With despair in his heart, he seems to watch the West—to watch the slow return of that civilisation which, long ages ago, set forth on her weary journey from the land of the rising sun, and ended it at the Golden Gates of San Francisco. She is returning now, and swiftly too, for she comes three times a week by the Orient Express; she sleeps at the "Palace Hotel," of Pera; she takes a luxurious steamer to Jaffa; thence by train to Jerusalem, stopping at the buffet at

Jericho (*dix minutes d'arrêt*) for luncheon. When she is comfortably installed in the brand-new hotel, she purchases, if so it pleases her, a twopenny tramcar fare, and goes to visit the Holy Places. She is not picturesque, decidedly, but she is essentially utilitarian! There is no driving her back. The Sheikh-ul-Islām himself and all his Mollahs could not do it. By-and-by she will send their pilgrims to Mecca by a *train de luxe*; or—who knows?—perhaps by balloon.

Be this as it may, education has already begun to take hold on Mohammedanism in Turkey. What its result will be, time alone can show. It stands to reason, however, that, in the course of time, Islām, if it is to endure at all, must perforce accommodate itself to a mighty intellectual change. "God made the world," the Mohammedan still repeats; "why do you want to know how He made it? If we wish to be happy, we have only to do nothing wicked, to obey the Koran, and to wait patiently until Allah calls us to our record." This fatalist doctrine may have been possible in other times. But to-day there is a forward impulse in all the peoples of the world—gathered together, in one common bond, to wage implacable war against falsehood and cruelty. Science and reason are synonymous, and unless education thoroughly and reverently understands them both, it becomes far worse than useless. Recent events, however, would seem to indicate that the Faith whose standard was the sword will perish by the sword. The blood of her millions of victims cries out against her, and though

the answer sometimes tarries in its coming, till all human patience and comprehension utterly fail, the cry of suffering rises inevitably—slowly, perhaps, but surely—to the ear of the All-Father, who is the All-Merciful, and the All-Just.

According to several learned Mohammedan authorities, although coffee and coffee-shops were first generally known under the reign of Suleymān II., coffee itself was introduced all over the Empire long before. The Turkish historian Ahmed Effendi attributes the discovery of coffee, in the year 656 of the Hejira, A.D. 1258, to a Dervish of the Schazyls order, at Moka in Arabia. It seems that, on one occasion, this worthy, who had been turned out of his convent and exiled on the Kiouth Ewasp mountain for refractory conduct, being pressed by hunger, conceived the idea of boiling the grain of a tree which grew in the neighbourhood. He found it sufficiently nourishing to subsist on for three days, until some of his friends, moved with compassion for his deplorable plight, sought him out and rescued him. Curiosity induced them to taste the beverage on which he had managed to last so long, and finding both the flavour and aroma excellent, they proceeded to gather a quantity of the berries, which they brought back with them to Moka. The local Pasha was induced to taste the new beverage, and found it so good that he forthwith caused the naughty Dervish to be brought before him, and, in recognition of his discovery, bestowed upon him a sum of money, to build a tekkieh for the order of Dervishes to which he belonged, which is said to be in existence at the present day.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE HAREEM.

POLYGAMY had flourished for centuries already among the wild tribes who thronged to worship the Ka'bah, or Black Stone of Mecca, and whom the Prophet Mahomet set himself to convert to his newly-invented religion.

But the traditions of Hebrew, Assyrian, Egyptian, and Persian civilisation were almost obliterated, and whatever privileges women had possessed in remoter ages were utterly lost. A man who desired to be rid of his wife, had only to accuse her of adultery, and forthwith he might slay her without further trial; while, if he did not care to be troubled with his female progeny, he buried his superfluous girls alive, and there was an end.* Mahomet determined to improve

* Among the Arabs who inhabit the peninsula of Arabia, the condition of women was extremely degraded, for amongst the pagan Arabs a woman was a mere chattel. She formed the integral of the estate of her husband or father, and the widows of a man descended to his son or sons by right of inheritance as any other portion of patrimony. Hence the frequent unions between step-sons and mothers-in-law, which were subsequently forbidden by Islām, were branded under the name of *Nikahu'l-Magt*, or "odious marriages."

the iniquitous customs which pressed so barbarously upon the weaker sex. By organising the Hareem into a system, with well-defined laws, as well as a ceremonious etiquette, he lifted the Eastern woman, not, indeed, to the high level which Christianity assigned her, but still to one immeasurably above that which she had as yet occupied among the nations he influenced, and he thus undoubtedly saved the lives of innumerable women and children. For he actually made a girl more valuable, commercially speaking, than a boy, since, if she was a pagan, she could be sold, and, once converted to the true faith, become her master's wife; and if, on the other hand, she was born a Mohammedan, a certain sum had to be paid her parents, by her suitor, as compensation for the expense of her education. But perhaps the greatest benefit Mahomet conferred upon woman was the very strict law he framed to ensure her absolute power over her own fortune. These rules remain in force to this day.

The pre-Islāmic Arabs also carried their aversion to women as far as to destroy, in various ways, many of their female children. This fearful custom was common among the tribes of Quraish and Kurdah. Although they used to call the angels the "daughters of God," they objected (as do the Bedawi to this day) to female offspring, and used to bury their female children alive. This horrible custom is referred to in the Koran, where it is said (Surah vi. 138): "Thus have their associates made the killing of their children appear seemly to the idolators the better to destroy them." And again (Surah xvi. 60, 61): "When any one of them has tidings of a female child, his face is overclouded and black, and he has to keep back his wrath. He skulks away from the public for the evil tidings he has heard; is he to keep it in disgrace or to bury it in the dust?"

A Mussulman cannot divorce his wife until he has restored every piastre of the money she brought him on her marriage, and he cannot, without her formal consent, touch her private means; that is to say, not her dower only, but whatever she may have received from her parents after her marriage, in the shape of gifts or legacies.* In consequence, however, of her very dependent position in the household, great abuses frequently arise, and the Moslim wife is swindled out of her property by her husband, more often than not, owing to her own ignorance of the laws intended to protect her. It is perfectly true, on the other hand, that a great many Turkish ladies assert their rights in a manner which may be more convincing than agreeable to their lords and masters. A few years ago, for instance, a certain Turkish Pasha, of no family, and small means, married, under peculiar circumstances, an extremely wealthy Egyptian Princess. Her dower amounted to nearly £20,000 sterling per annum. After a time she discovered her husband to be a gambler; so Her Highness summoned her agent from

* The Koran created a thorough revolution in the condition of women. For the first time in the history of Oriental legislation, the principle of equality between the sexes was recognised, and practically carried into effect. "The women," says the Koran, "ought to behave to their husbands in like manner as their husbands should behave towards them, according to what is just" (Koran, chap. ii. v. 228). And Mahomet, in his discourse on *Jabl-i-Arafât*, emphasized the precept by declaring in eloquent terms, "Ye men, ye have right over your wives, and your wives have right over you" (Ibn Hishâm). In accordance with these precepts the Mohammedan law declares *equality* between the married parties to be the regulating principle of all domestic relationship.—*Stanley Lane Poole.*

Cairo, and in order to protect her fortune, without even consulting the Pasha, she settled one-fourth of her income on him, and tied up the rest for her own use.

Another advantage which Mahomet secured to the women of his time was protection from outrage. He had recourse to the leading trait of the Oriental character—jealousy—and by placing the women of a household under the absolute control of their master, rendered it a theological, as well as a legal, offence for a near relative, much more a stranger, to speak to, or even look at them.

Notwithstanding his professed affection for his cousin, the rich widow Kadija, whom he subsequently married, and whose wealth so greatly assisted him in carrying out his ambitious projects, Mahomet invariably speaks of women with arrogance and contempt. "Woman," says the Koran, is "a field"—a sort of property which her husband may use or abuse as he thinks fit. "The happiness of a woman, in Paradise, is beneath the sole of her husband's feet"; and to this day the bride enters the nuptial bed at the foot, lifting the counterpane with much prescribed ceremony.

"The good wife," the Koran further asserts, "has a chance of eternal happiness only if that be her husband's will"; but the other and lowlier women of his Hareem have no fixed destination hereafter, although, to be sure, it is not explicitly stated that they are to be everlastingly damned. The moral of all this is that a Mohammedan woman's sole aim in life must be to win, at any cost, the favour of her husband,

for on that depends, not only her comfort in this world, but her happiness in the world to come. The fortunate fair who has given pleasure to her liege lord, will have the privilege of appearing before him in Paradise "like the moon in her first quarter." She will preserve all her beauty and youth until the end of time, and her husband will never look older nor younger than thirty-one years.*

Having lifted one sex so immeasurably above the other, the Prophet next set to work to frame a code intended to keep the women in their proper place. On one of the little slips of parchment, with which the Archangel Gabriel was wont to supply the great law-giver, will be found this line: "If your wives do not obey you, chastise them." Now, it is a curious fact that in legislating for the treatment of slaves, the Prophet gives the exact number of strokes it is lawful

* The legal position of a wife under Sunni, and, with some slight difference, under Shi'ah law also, may be generally stated as follows:

Her consent to a marriage is necessary. She cannot legally object to be one of four wives. Nor can she object to an unlimited number of handmaids. She is entitled to a marriage settlement or dower, which must be paid to her in case of divorce or separation. She may, however, remit either whole or part of the dower. She may refuse to join her husband until the dower is paid. She may be at any time, with or without cause, divorced by her husband. She may seek or claim divorce (khul') from her husband with her husband's consent. She may be chastised by her husband, and she cannot give evidence in a court of law against her husband. According to the Sunnis, her evidence in favour of her husband is not admissible, but the Shi'ahs maintain the opposite view. Her husband can demand her seclusion from public. If she becomes a widow she must observe *hidād*, or mourning, for the space of four months and ten days. In the event of her husband's death, she is

for the master to administer; but the wife's punishment is left entirely to the discretion of her lord.

Mahomet did indeed proclaim monogamy to be superior to polygamy, but he soon modified this by declaring that, "if one wife does not suffice, it is lawful to take four," on this curious condition, however, that the four women must be treated with impartiality, each having her own special apartments, her servants, and jewels, but all as nearly alike as possible. To this day the old-fashioned Turks, when they make a present to their wives, on certain feasts of the year, give each precise replicas of the piece of silk, or set of jewels, or whatever other object they think fit to offer them. This regulation also accounts for the amazing rapacity of the Turks when they rise to power. They have such enormous establishments to keep up. A Constantinopolitan gentleman, with whom I am ac-

entitled to a portion of her husband's estate in addition to her claim of dower, the claim of dower taking precedence of all other claims on the estate.

"The fatal blot in Islām is the degradation of women," says Stanley Lane Poole. "Yet it would be hard to lay the blame altogether on Mahomet. The real roots of the degradation of women lie much deeper. When Islām was instituted, polygamy was almost necessitated by the number of women and their need of support; and the facility of divorce was quite necessitated by the separation of the sexes, and the consequence that a man could not know or even see the woman he was about to marry before the ceremony was accomplished. It is not Mahomet whom we have to blame for these great evils, polygamy and divorce; it is the state of society which demanded the separation of the sexes, and in which it was not safe to allow men and women freely to associate; in other words, it was the sensual constitution of the Arab that lay at the root of the matter."

quainted, who had ascended the social ladder through the caprice of a former Grand Vizir, and from being a boy in a travelling circus, had risen to be an official of high rank, gave me, one day, in an outburst of confidence, the following singular piece of information: "It is very difficult for a Turkish official, however ample his salary may be, to make two ends meet, because the women of his household, elated by his good fortune, become wildly extravagant. Fortunately I have only one wife, and she is a very well-educated woman and knows how to economise; nevertheless she has fifteen slaves and attendants to wait upon her, and my widowed sister, whom, according to our laws—as she is past the age of re-marriage, and a very poor woman—I am obliged to support. I have, therefore, seventeen women to lodge and feed, besides a number of male servants, my household numbering not less than thirty-two persons. This is nothing, however, to that of my neighbour, the Minister of ——, who has four wives, inhabiting separate suites of apartments, with between ten and twenty attendants to wait upon each of them. His Hareem is composed of nearly eighty women, and there are besides about twenty male servants in the house.

"Formerly, when people lived after the old-fashioned Turkish custom, when divans and carpets, cushions, and rich embroideries, were considered ample furniture for any room, and provisions were about a tenth cheaper than they are now, this way of living was an excellent manner of providing comfortably for a number of persons, who would otherwise have been

very badly off. Seventy years ago the women wore the beautiful costume of their country, very rarely went out, and passed their time happily and indolently within the walls of the Hareem. They all ate out of one dish with their fingers—they do that now, indeed, in nine houses out of ten. At sunset they went to bed, excepting, of course, in the month of Ramazān, when we keep open house all night. In those days a few hundreds a year sufficed to maintain a very large establishment.* Now all is changed. Our houses are furnished, more or less, in the European style. Our women dress at home like yours. Many of them read French perfectly, and usually select the most pernicious novels. Education makes them miserable and insubordinate, and their only happiness in life is to gad about the streets of the European quarters, with their faces as little covered as possible, and to make useless purchases at the Bon Marché. It is impossible to supply their wants without subsidiary assistance, and this is, I assure you, the chief cause of the well-understood system of pillage by officials which goes on all over the Empire."

We may conclude, therefore, that Mahomet's law, which provides so impartially for the four ladies of the original Hareem, has become impracticable under

* "The maintenance (nafkah) of a wife includes everything connected with her support and comfort, such as food, raiment, lodgings, etc., and must be provided in accordance with the social position occupied."—("I Fatâwa-i-Alamgîrî," p. 737; "I Fatâwa-i-Kâzi Khân; Jâma-ush-Shattât, Fûsul - Imâdiyah; Mâfatîh; 1 Hed," English Translation, p. 392.)

altered circumstances, and the better educated Turks are beginning to grasp the fact that it is wiser to have a single wife "than four who literally devour you."

Although the Koran limits the number of the true believer's wives to four, the example of the Prophet himself, who had fifteen, has led to what I might call a legalised abuse. All the slave women in the house are at the disposal of the master, and if they bear him children, these are very properly considered as legitimate as those of his lawful wives, and the mother, if there is no vacancy by the death of one or the other of the wives, is raised to the rank of Odalik, or, as we write it, Odalisque, or legitimate mistress, literally "woman of the room."

The duties imposed upon women by the Koran are much more numerous than those prescribed for the men, but they are mostly of a nature which I must perforce omit to specify, dealing more or less with their ablutions, and the imperative use of the bath on certain very intimate occasions. As soon as a woman has reached the age of puberty, her face must be veiled, and no man may see her countenance unless he be her husband or nearest male relation. Even her hands must be covered. Mahomet was very particular about this last, and you will scarcely ever see a Turkish woman of any position without gloves. The Prophet considered pretty hands to be most seductive. The windows of the women's apartments must either open upon an inner courtyard, or be so closely barred as to render it impossible for people in the street to see in. No woman may go out before

sunrise, or after sunset, excepting in Ramazān, and no lady can appear in the street, unless attended by at least two or three slaves, who walk at a discreet distance behind her. The husband, or the son who has attained the age of fifteen years, may not walk side by side with any female, even his own wife or mother, although a few do so in the country. The women always have their meals apart, and, even among the very poor, they sit at one end of the room, with a curtain drawn between them and the men. A like curtain, usually a very dirty one, separates the Mohammedan women from the men in the street cars, and they have a separate compartment allotted to them on board the steamers and ferry-boats. Many modifications have taken place, lately, in the habits of Moslim women, especially in the capital. The *yashmac*,* or face veil, which has to be ironed each time it is put on, and the proper adjustment of which takes a good ten minutes, has become merely a coquettish and very becoming head-dress, through the gauze of which the features are distinctly visible. Only old and ugly women, or ladies who wish to do their shopping without being recognised, wear it *all' antica*—that is, made of very thick muslin or linen. All the Court ladies, and wives of Pashas, must wear a *yashmac* made of the finest lawn; but a great many ladies of lesser rank

* The word *yashmac* is the imperative mood of a Turkish verb used to express the desire that life should be granted. Thus the Sovereign will be greeted with the words "*Pādishāh chock yasha*"—"May he long live." And the girl who reaches the marriageable age receives the *yashmac* with "the wish that she may live."—R. D.

content themselves with the Egyptian *chaf-chaf*, a sort of black silk hood with a thin piece of black net affixed to it, which can be dropped over the face when the wearer likes. As a rule, she does *not* like, and you can see her features as plainly as those of most Catholic nuns.* The use of paints, hair-dyes, and the fashion of joining the eyebrows by cosmetics over the nose, as well as the habit of dyeing the finger and toe-tips with henna, has nearly disappeared in the better class of families in the capital, but not so in the provinces. The *feridjé*, or regulation cloak, supposed to conceal the form, has also undergone great modification, and is now fashioned after the style of the latest opera-cloaks from Paris or Vienna, even to the leg-of-mutton sleeves, and made of any kind of silk brocade or cloth. The great ladies usually select black, except in summer, when the most delicate shades and fashionable colours are permissible. The famous yellow double-slippers have entirely disappeared, and low patent leather shoes are all the fashion, and very inconvenient they must be in the dirty streets of Constantinople. Sixty years ago all the Christian native women were veiled, and I have spoken to a very old English lady resident in Pera, who told me that when she was a girl she also wore the *yashmac*, as it was not safe to go out without it. If further evidence were needed of the

* The Mohammedan women in the interior of the country, with the sole exception of the Kurds, who do not veil, have their faces much more closely screened than in the capital and other Europeanised cities. The Christian women, in the remoter provinces, are also thickly veiled.

seclusion in which European women formerly lived in Constantinople, the following letter from Father Tarillon, dated 1712, and describing the rebuilding of the church of St. Benedict in Galata, certainly gives it.

"Our new church," he says, "is the most beautiful in Turkey. It has splendid columns, which support the gallery, and is built entirely of white marble. The body of the church is vaulted, and the nave is decorated very richly. It contains the monuments of several French Ambassadors, and also that of the young Princess Tékélé and of her mother. There is a large tribune surrounding the church for the women, and, as is the rule in this country, it is screened with very thick jalousies, or grilles, so that the men cannot see the women who are at their devotions within it."

A very old lady of my acquaintance told me that when she was a young girl, no woman of any nationality was seen in Constantinople without a *yashmac*, unless she was somebody in high official position; and that even in the Armenian and Greek houses there was very little intercourse between the two sexes, except in the case of near relations. However, if a Turkish lady ought not, as a good Mohammedan, to show her face, she does not scruple to display her legs, by lifting her petticoats—sometimes above the line of discretion.

Formerly Turkish ladies of the highest rank attended the public baths, on certain days of the week, sometimes passing several days in them, but the introduction of modern improvements, including baths, into the better class of houses, has done away with

a custom which Miss Pardoe, who visited Constantinople in 1830, has described so picturesquely in her charming and, I am 'sure, very accurate book, the "City of the Sultan." I say very accurate, because I noticed so many traces of customs she saw in their quondam perfection, but which are now fast passing away.

I rather doubt that the elaborate system of hot baths now so universal in Turkey, was in general use before 1453. Fine baths may have existed at Damascus, Baghdad, and Brusa, and in other very large cities, but these were insignificant compared with the splendid baths the Turks found ready to their hand at Constantinople. All of these, with the exception of the bath of Sultan Mohammed, near the Great Bazaar, have disappeared in the lapse of centuries, and been replaced by hundreds of commodious bath-houses of no architectural pretension, and almost invariably fitted up economically with wood-work, instead of the rare marbles of olden times.

In an Italian work, "Constantinopoli ed i Turchi," dated 1510, there is a curious engraving of Turkish ladies proceeding to the bath, followed by a train of slaves carrying on their heads magnificent bathing robes and towels, and baskets full of fruit, pastry, and perfumes, which their mistresses evidently intended to consume during their retirement in some luxuriously appointed bath-house. It is interesting to observe, in this connection, that Christian, and even Jewish women, were permitted to make free use of the public baths with their Turkish sisters.

Turkish women, although their position in the next world is so very unsatisfactory and undefined, are, nevertheless, fairly pious. They are to be seen in most of the mosques, notably in the Ahmedieh, on Fridays, and in Ramazān they go in crowds to evening service in the beautiful Shahzadé, or Mosque of the Princes. In well-regulated households, prayers are said five times a day by all the women; but in contradistinction to the men, they never pray aloud. They have their favourite Imāms and Dervishes, just as Catholic ladies have their pet confessors and friars. Whilst on the subject of the religion of Turkish women, I may add that a Turk can marry a Christian or a Jewish girl, and that she is not obliged to change her religion, but her children must be brought up Mohammedans. Several Turkish Pashas are married to French, Hungarian, and even English ladies; but these marriages are, as I understand, rarely happy. The lady is obliged to conform to the usages of the Hareem, and these soon become very irksome to one who has been accustomed to freedom. Moreover, the Giaour wives are not well received by their Moslim lady relations and acquaintances; and, altogether, mixed marriages in Turkey are usually a failure, and apt to end in serious trouble. "It is the custom of the Turks," says my friend of the *Teatro della Turchia*, "to marry the widows of their deceased brothers, and also the sisters of their deceased wives; but they cannot marry two living sisters. To this day, it is the custom in many parts of the Ottoman Empire, and, I believe, in Constantinople itself, for a man to marry his deceased brother's widow."

Divorce is obtained in Turkey with a facility which would surprise even our Transatlantic cousins. As easily as Abraham cast forth Hagar the bondwoman and her child, the Turk can open the door of his Hareem and send the woman who no longer pleases him out into the world. He has but to give her back her dower and personal effects. In the upper classes, however, certain legal formalities are gone through; and, indeed, as the lady is usually protected by her parents, divorce is, comparatively speaking, rare.*

I know instances, however, in Constantinople, of ladies in the highest official circles, and not yet very far advanced in years, who have been divorced twice, thrice, and even ten times. Among the lower orders, divorce may be described as a mere farce. During the winter of 1894, a Turkish labourer fell ill at Rumelli-Hissar. His wife, an excellent creature, nursed him with exemplary patience, kindly assisted by some charitable American ladies. When he got well he rewarded her by divorcing her. He simply gave her the few piastres she had brought with her as dower, and turned her out of doors. Before the day was over, however, the poor soul, who in the morning had announced her misfortune to her Giaour friends with sobs and tears, returned to them with a

* *Divorce*, Arabic *talāq*. In its primitive sense the word *talāq* means dismissal, but in law it signifies a release from the marriage tie. The Mohammedan law of divorce is founded upon express injunctions contained in the Koran, as well as in the Traditions, and its rules occupy a very large section in all Mohammedan works on jurisprudence. See Hughes' "Dictionary of Islam," under "Divorce," p. 86.

beaming countenance. She had found a protector—a new husband—in the person of a wandering Hodja, or fortune-teller, who, tempted doubtless by her little fortune, was willing to take her to his heart and home. At Brusa, in the silk factories, where Mohammedan women are employed, it not unfrequently happens that a young girl will come in the morning to the overseer and ask for an hour's leave. "What for?" says he. "To get divorced. My husband is tired of me, and I of him!" Later in the day she demands another hour's leave—this time to get re-married. Many of these girls, who are not yet twenty years of age, have been divorced and re-married a dozen times. The *surprises du divorce* are amongst the most amusing features of Turkish social life. A very great personage, a former Grand Vizir, married, some few years ago, when his position was distinctly inferior to what it is at present, a sister of R—— Pasha, a highly educated lady of good connexion and fortune, but, according to His Highness's version of the story, of ungovernable temper. Within the year they were divorced and re-married. The lady soon found her new husband disagreeable, and was once more divorced. (It must be remembered that if a Turk can divorce his wife, her only chance of getting rid of him is to make herself as disagreeable to him as possible, and so drive him to take that course. In former times he tied her up in a sack and had her dropped into the Bosphorus, now he divorces her.) To return to the lady in question. The next time she was heard of by her friends she was a teacher in the Mohammedan

High School for girls, at Scutari. A few years back she was selected as governess to the children of the mother of the Khedive, and is now Her Highness's private secretary, in which quality she recently accompanied her Imperial mistress to Constantinople, and actually found herself seated at a State banquet, given by the Valideh-Sultan at Yildiz Kiosk, next to the third wife of her first husband, who innocently asked her who she was. Tableau! The ease with which divorce can be obtained in Turkey leads to many abuses, and creates a state of affairs not unlike what we call prostitution in this country.

Most of the beggar-women in Constantinople—and they are innumerable—are divorced women whose frequent exchange of husbands has brought them to the level of the most unfortunate of their Christian sisters. They have grown too old to find even a fellow-beggar to mate with, and usually end their days in abject misery and blindness in some deserted cemetery.

I will merely hint at the hideous traffic in little children which goes on in all the large cities of the Empire, and at the queer scenes which take place among the soldiers and their lasses in the various cemeteries after dark; but I could, "an I chose," speak of things which would tend to prove that prostitution under another form does exist, and very widely, in Turkey, even among Mohammedan females.

Fuad Pasha said, many years ago, that the emancipation of Turkey must begin by the emancipation of Turkish women, and I feel convinced that *the*

question of the East is the woman's question. We must not imagine that because the women of Constantinople are not as closely veiled* as they were until quite recently, and wear European clothes of the latest fashion under their regulation *feridjé*, that their position has materially changed from what it was five hundred years ago. The mass of Turkish women, some thirty millions, are little better than animals. The power of the man in his Hareem is absolute. Fortunately for his female relations, the average Turk is a kindly, indolent fellow, who does his best to obey the laws of his religion, which command him to treat his women with humanity; but his interest is involved in keeping them down as inferior beings, and in absolute seclusion. It is an impertinence to inquire of a Turkish gentleman after the health of his wife, even if you know her to be at the point of death. Above all, if you do not wish to offend him, never question him about his daughters, and remember that the women of his family and household, and their affairs, are his exclusive property.

The following expression of opinion, which I had from a Turk of high standing, will give a very fair idea of the present state of Turkish social life in the capital. Z—— Pasha, a gentleman who speaks several European languages perfectly, and who has lived much in Paris and London, said to me one

* The *yashmac* now in general use is not of Turkish invention. It was adopted by the Turks from the Byzantines. I have recently seen a genuine *Tanagra* figure with a distinct *yashmac*, draped and pinned exactly like the Turkish head-dress.

day: "There is no social or family life in Turkey, although of late years there has been some improvement in the matter of the education of women. Still, I think I should speak the truth if I declared that, out of the enormous number of women in Constantinople—the population is nearly a million—there are even now not more than five thousand who can read and write their own language, and not over two hundred who can speak a foreign tongue. Our women are debarred from all intellectual life. They can take no practical interest in anything except their household concerns, their gossip, and their clothes. They have no sense of economy, and even if they know their husbands to be on the verge of ruin, they never hesitate to run up bills in the shops of Pera or in the Great Bazaar. Their chief object in life is to get money and spend it. Their conversation is not only trivial, but very often indecent.*

"In olden times, when the Turk himself was uneducated, and led the humdrum life of a merchant, or the arduous one of a soldier, this mattered very little. He did not need companionship in his wives or in the females of his household. If they amused

* Some years ago the Sultan granted permission to the young Turkish girls of the upper classes to be educated in the Christian schools and convents. I visited, during my recent stay in Constantinople, nearly all the principal female schools, and was invariably assured by the superioresses of convents, and the mistresses of schools of all nationalities, that they were delighted His Majesty had withdrawn his authorisation, for "one little Turkish girl's conversation was enough to corrupt an entire class, so indescribably filthy was it."

him and made him comfortable, what more could he want? But things have changed. If our children are to advance in their careers, they have to be educated like Europeans, and this leads them to read your literature and your papers, and to travel. Well, if you take interest in what is going on around you, what happiness can you expect in a home where your female folk are no better educated than monkeys? Our social system was all very well before the reforms introduced by the grandfather of his present Majesty, but now it is obsolete—useless!"

The following curious account of a recent visit to the Hareem of the Sheikh-ul-Islām, which is kept up in the old style, is kindly furnished by Lady ——, who was staying at the Hotel Bristol in the winter of 1894 at the same time as myself:

"Thanks to the kindness of my dear old friend and governess, Fräulein ——, we were enabled to visit a number of Hareems, among them that of the Sheikh-ul-Islām. We arrived at his Palace about noon, and were received at the main entrance by a black eunuch, who led us to a long apartment at the top of the staircase, where we were greeted by the Sheikh himself, accompanied by his eldest son. His Excellency was dressed in Oriental costume, and after we had partaken of some sweet syrups, handed round on a magnificent silver salver, and washed down with water, he conducted us into the Hareem. The first chamber we entered was extremely large, and was occupied by some thirty ladies of various ages, seated on divans. Some of them were smoking

cigarettes and chibouks. Two or three were reading, but the majority were simply gossiping. Among them were a number of slave girls and little children, the noise of whose deafening chatter reminded me of the parrot house at the Zoo. On our entering they all, save two, hastily veiled themselves and rose to their feet, to salute the Sheikh and ourselves. I discovered afterwards that the two ladies who remained uncovered were the Kutchuk Hanum, or younger wife, and her daughter. On receiving permission to do so, they all reseated themselves, and recommenced their chattering just as if we were not present. In a handsome room beyond, furnished in the Turkish style, with divans covered with splendid silks and embroideries, was the Sheikh's first wife, the Buyuk Hanum, and his mother. They received us very civilly, apologising for their slovenly appearance. The Fräulein, who was of our party, now stepped forward and acted as interpreter. We learnt that the Hareem had lately lost its chief attraction, an elder and very lovely daughter of the Sheikh, who had died within the week, of consumption. As mourning, in our sense of the word, is not a Turkish custom, the ladies, to emphasize their regret at this loss, had put on their oldest and commonest attire. The Buyuk Hanum, or senior wife, was a nice-looking, gray-haired old lady, but her dress, which was in the Turkish style, was exceedingly shabby, and her trousers the reverse of clean. She immediately ordered refreshment by clapping her hands, and offered us a somewhat substantial meal, consisting of an excellent

broth, pilaf with rice, and a rather pleasant-flavoured dish of mincemeat, rolled up in young vine-leaves, and served with a very rich kind of tomato sauce. Then came little birds, daintily roasted on a skewer, and lastly, some very sickly sweetmeats, and all sorts of candied and dried fruits. To wash this meal down, we had rich syrups and rice-water, and an agreeable drink made of barley and spice, served hot. After this we were rejoined by the Sheikh-ul-Islām, who had absented himself during our repast—which, by the way, was served on little low tables, and eaten without knives or forks. Our hostess helped us to the choicest morsels with her own pretty little taper fingers, the nails of which were scarlet with henna. A young girl now came forward, squatted herself on the floor, and sang an interminable song, full of elaborate cadences, to the accompaniment of a mandoline. The party was next increased by the arrival of the Sheikh's daughter-in-law. This lady was evidently not in mourning, for she wore a magnificent rose-coloured tea-gown, and blazed with jewels. She was a nice-looking little lady, spoke excellent French, and asked innumerable questions about Paris and London. On a signal from the Sheikh, we rose and took our leave of the ladies, and were escorted, with much ceremony, to another part of the house, to pay our respects to His Excellency's father, an old gentleman nearly one hundred years of age, who sat buried in cushions on a low divan, attended by four pretty little slave girls, one of whom apparently looked after his pipe, while a second fanned him, and the two others chafed his

feet. As he was not particularly communicative, we made him our obeisances, and descended into the Hareem garden, which we found in a most dilapidated condition. The Sheikh's own particular garden, however, was in excellent order, and full of very early spring flowers, of which his son gathered us a bouquet. Just as we were about to take our departure, an old slave woman hobbled into the garden, and demanded our presence once more in the Buyuk Hanum's apartments, whither we hurried as fast as we could. The kindly lady had resolved we should not depart without giving us a souvenir of our visit. We found her half buried in a big trunk, from which she was extracting rolls of silk, little boxes of jewels, and even treasured copies of bygone Christmas numbers of the *Graphic*. At last she settled upon two very handsome silver clasps, which she presented to myself and my friend with great ceremony. Presently, recollecting the Fräulein, who had been governess in her establishment for some years, she rushed to the box again, and seized a great roll of yellow satin, which she presented to her old friend, heartily kissing her on both cheeks as she did so. And so ended our visit to what might be called the 'Vatican of the East.'"

To give some idea of the earlier life of a young boy of the wealthier class, I will relate, as it was described to me by a Turkish friend, the sort of existence led by—we will say—Ahmed Bey, the son of X—— Pasha. Ahmed is the eldest boy of a rich man, who has four wives in his Hareem of sixty women. Possibly his mother was a Cir-

cassian slave. At present she is, we will suppose, the Buyuk Hanum, or first wife, of His Excellency. As a baby our young friend Ahmed probably wore, for two years, very tight swaddling clothes. As he grew older and began to feel his legs, a little uniform was made for him, an exact facsimile of his father's, epaulettes, decorations, sword and all. In this costume, awkward enough for so tiny a person, he was occasionally taken out by His Excellency for a walk or a drive. He was permitted to accompany his mother, or foster-mother, to visit the Hareems of their friends and relations, and to see the shops and bazaars. Hygiene was utterly neglected, save for an over-frequent use of the hot bath, and an occasional ride on horseback. Ahmed at last grew up to be twelve years of age, when he was circumcised—a great event in his early life. The Hareem was upside down for three days, and the ladies kept open house for all the women of their acquaintance. Refreshments and presents were offered to every one. Conjurers, dancers, and theatrical representations, including, of course, Karagheuz and his unspeakable obscenities, amused the fair inmates of the Hareem, and were repeated in the Selāmlick or men's apartment, where unbounded hospitality was dispensed in honour of our friend Ahmed, and his initiation into the mysteries of his religion. But now began poor Ahmed's trials. He had to struggle with the Koran and learn it by heart. At fourteen he was sent to a public school—the Galata Seraï most probably—where he obtained a fair education. But Turkish caligraphy is so dreadfully difficult

to learn that the poor child had to work six years in his endeavour to master it, in addition to the innumerable items of education imposed upon him by a Government which has modelled its high schools on those of Paris and Berlin. Yet Ahmed, being fairly quick and intelligent, soon picked up a foreign language or two, and devoted his leisure to reading French novels. At the age of sixteen he was formally introduced to a little slave girl, and a ceremony took place in the Hareem which were best referred to in the curtest manner. After this introduction to the mysteries of life, Ahmed was excluded from the Hareem, and only allowed to pay occasional visits to his mother and sisters.

At last our young friend arrives at a marriageable age. In the good old times matters were considerably simplified. His mother would either have made up a match for him with some wealthy girl of her family or acquaintance, or his father would have gone down to the slave-market and purchased him the prettiest wench he could find. As for consulting Ahmed's wishes or taste in the matter, that would never have entered their heads. But opinions have changed a little in Turkey, and Ahmed is now allowed some voice in the matter. Still, it is impossible for him to converse with his *fiancée* or form any idea of her character or appearance. He has to take it all on maternal authority. Amongst the wealthier classes, the marriage is always arranged between the mothers of the young people, with the approbation, of course, of their fathers. At present, a sort of matrimonial agency has been established in

Constantinople which is managed thus: There are a number of old women, of fairly respectable position, known as Geuruji Seers, or Dellal, whose principal occupation of life is to find out marriageable young girls, and announce their existence to mothers in search of daughters-in-law. These old ladies go from Hareem to Hareem, and obtain all the particulars they can collect, which they impart to those who employ them. Our friend Ahmed's mother sends for one of these Geuruji, and when, although personally a stranger to the family, she is convinced that within a certain Hareem a desirable maiden exists, she puts on her best *feridjé* and *yashmac*, orders her coach and attendants, and pays a visit to the mother of the promising damsel. After the usual ceremonies, which are very elaborate, and the obligatory cup of coffee, the two ladies proceed to business. The mother of Ahmed gives a vivid account of her son's qualifications and prospects. "He is, believe me, hanum (lady), the handsomest young man in Constantinople." Here she produces his photograph. "He has on more than one occasion, I assure you, Effendim, attracted the attention of His Majesty at the Selāmlick, and is sure one day to be a Pasha, like his dear father, and eventually Minister." The mother of the damsel, in her turn, extols the qualities and the beauty of her daughter. Presently the young woman herself appears on the scene, most probably arrayed in an elaborate tea-gown from Paris or Vienna. Having kissed the hem of her mother's garment, and made her obeisance to her probable mother-in-law, she proceeds to display

her natural beauties, and her acquired accomplishments. She lets down her hair, and smiles, or better, grins, to show the whiteness of her teeth, after which she speaks a little French or German, to show off her proficiency in those languages. If there is a piano, she plays a polka, or an elaborate fantasia on some popular opera, and finally winds up the exhibition by dancing. "Mash Allah," cries Ahmed's mother, "Mash Allah, what a miracle of beauty! what an entrancing creature!" Then rising, she embraces the girl, who, after the usual obeisance, retires. Then the two ladies come to hard facts. Beauty and accomplishments are all very well, but you cannot live on them, and money has as much value in the eyes of a Stambul lady as in those of any dame in Mayfair or Belgravia. The dower question sometimes puts an abrupt end to the interview, but if all is satisfactory, it is arranged that Ahmed shall have a chance, the following Friday, of beholding the charms of his betrothed through as slight a veil as the law permits. On her return home, Ahmed's mother tells him what has happened, and he forthwith has his uniform smartened up, and making himself look as spruce as possible, goes, the next Friday, as close as ever he dares, to the long line of coaches drawn up under the trees in the pastures of the Sweet Waters of Europe. From the window of a certain carriage he perceives a young lady leaning, and holding in her hand some flower or other trifle, whereby he recognises her as the maiden of his mother's choice. Even her *yashmac* cannot conceal the magnificence of her eyes, or the

perfect arching of her eyebrows, and she is evidently all that his maternal parent has represented her to be. Ahmed straightway falls wildly in love, and sets himself to compose verses in her honour, which he writes out, on pink scented paper, in the choicest Turkish caligraphy. Several interviews take place, in rapid succession, between the two mothers, and preliminary matters are speedily arranged. Ahmed's family send the future bride as rich a present as their fortune will admit, and her father and mother, in return, make an equally rich present to young Ahmed.

A few days later a curious incident takes place. The father of the future husband forwards to the father of the bride a present in money, or *Aghirlick*, which is supposed to represent the exact weight of his daughter, so that it is in reality the bridegroom's family which provides the dower; but it is usual for people in good circumstances to give their daughter a sufficient sum of money to render her fairly independent, and at her father's death she inherits, with his sisters and his widows, two-thirds of his fortune, equally divided between them all. It is this money, together with all her jewels and household effects, which must be restored to the young woman in case of divorce. At last the great day comes. As the Koran does not consider religious marriage a necessity, an Imām may, or may not, be invited to bless the couple. But nowadays, in imitation of the Europeans, the priest is usually present. A Turkish marriage takes place in the afternoon. Ahmed leaves his father's house on horseback, ac-

companied by a number of his young friends. He wears his smartest uniform, and has evidently made the best of his personal attractions. When the party arrives at the bride's house, they find the doors besieged by a motley crowd. All the women of the quarter have turned out to criticise the bride and bridegroom, and the young man has to pass into the house amid a perfect storm of compliments and benedictions, which he answers by scattering several handfuls of small coin broadcast. At the foot of the staircase he is met and embraced by his father-in-law and all the male members of the house, who escort him to the principal apartment of the Selāmlick, where he finds his friends and relatives assembled, and partakes of coffee, sherbet, and other light refreshments. In the meantime the scene in the Hareem is wonderfully amusing. The bride, whom we will call Gul Hanum, or the Lady Rose, is dressed in the most elaborate Parisian bridal costume, with an immense long train, a wreath of orange flowers on her head, and a pink veil reaching to the ground. She sits like a statue, on a sort of throne placed at the further end of the apartment, beneath a canopy composed of garlands of artificial roses. All the ladies of her family and acquaintance are present—some few, the elder, in the beautiful Oriental costumes of a bygone time, the rest in badly-chosen European evening-dresses, and blazing with all the jewellery they can load upon their persons. In the upper classes of Turkish society in the metropolis, the curious bridal head-dress, made of gold filings

nearly a yard long, has entirely disappeared. But I was once fortunate enough, in a low quarter of Constantinople, to catch a glimpse of a bride, who was passing through a courtyard, wearing this glittering shower of golden wire. Gul Hanum sits on her throne as immovable as a sphinx, while her friends eat, drink, and make merry, and examine the bridal gifts, which are protected by a wire grating, to prevent pilfering—for it must be remembered that at a Turkish wedding, according to ancient custom, the poorest woman in the street is allowed to come up and see the bride and her presents. The noise and the chatter is deafening. The refreshments are of the most elaborate description, and the company is entertained by dancers and conjurers. An hour before sunset the Mu'azzin calls the Faithful to prayers, and both in the Selāmlick and the Hareem, the company fall on their knees, and go through all the gymnastics peculiar to Mohammedan devotion. At last the women take their leave, for it is not lawful for a Moslim woman, except in Ramazān, to be abroad after dark.

Meanwhile, in the Selāmlick another singular scene is going on. Ahmed has to run for his life to the Hareem, under a shower of old shoes. (May we not have derived our custom of throwing an old slipper after the bride and bridegroom, as they depart on their honeymoon, from the Turks, who hold that an old slipper thrown after a man is an infallible charm against the evil eye?) At the door of the Hareem he finds a eunuch holding a huge wax candle in his hand.

Fifty or sixty years ago, this individual would have worn the long striped garments and huge turban peculiar to his office. To-day he is arrayed in a second-hand frock-coat, or a suit of dittos. The eunuch opens "the gate of paradise," the door of the nuptial chamber. The oldest woman in the Hareem, or Yenghié Hanum, receives the bridegroom, and leads him to the bride, still seated as motionless as a statue on her divan, enveloped from head to foot in her pink veil. Ahmed, who has now the right to behold her features, falls on his knees at her feet, and implores her, in the most pathetic language he can command, to permit him to gaze upon her countenance. "Light of my eyes," he exclaims with passionate ardour, "tell me your name." The bride answers three times, "Gul —Gul—Gul," and the old woman, stepping forward, relieves her of her veil. The bride and bridegroom now sit down to a frugal supper of chicken and rice, and a few minutes afterwards the ancient female withdraws discreetly, and they are left *en tête-à-tête* for the first time in their lives, *et bon soir!* If the lady is well educated and clever, and many Turkish women are exceedingly intelligent, she may keep Ahmed all to herself, and have no rivals in the household; but usually, in the course of a year or so, another wife is added to the Hareem, and the fair Gul is henceforth known as the Great Lady, or Buyuk Hanum, and the second is called the Skindji Hanum, or the Second Lady; and if in due time a third and fourth appear in the family circle, they are styled respectively the Artanié Hanum, or the Middle Lady, and the

Kutchuk Hanum, or the Little Lady, and these titles they retain to the end of their lives, or as long as they remain undivorced. If a visitor comes to see them, she invariably asks for them by these titles, and not by their own name. Even the children are classed according to their mother's rank and order. One would never say, in speaking of the children of a Pasha, that they are his sons by Gul Hanum, for instance, but by the Great Lady, the Second Lady, etc. The name of the father is never pronounced within the Hareem walls. If a husband addresses a letter to one or the other of his four wives, he would never think of addressing it to Zerah, Leilia, Nesibé, Conjefem, or Dilarum Hanum, but always to the Great Lady, the Second Lady, and so forth.

The rules of Hareem etiquette are very stringent. No wife may present herself in the presence of her husband without either previously informing him of her intended visit, or being commanded to come before him. This message is usually sent by a female slave or by a eunuch. Each wife takes it in turn to minister to the comfort of her lord, to look after his clothes, to offer him his pipe and coffee, and to make herself generally agreeable during the time he wishes her to remain in intimate contact with him, which sometimes is for a whole year. When he is tired of her company he makes her a small present, and she retires until she is asked for again. Meanwhile the other women, who usually have an army of attendants, according to the means of the master of the house, or their own, spend their time in prayers, bathing, playing

with their children, dressing, dancing, and, above all, in paying visits and shopping. If the four wives happen to be in the same room together, it is the etiquette for the Great Lady to grant permission to the Second Lady to sit down, who, in her turn, motions to the Third that she may rest her weary body on the divan, and, finally, this lady sends on the welcome message to the Fourth or Kutchuk Hanum. If the mother of the master of the house comes into the general sitting-room, everybody rises to salute her, and nobody sits down until she has given them permission to do so. Some fifty years ago the interiors of Turkish Hareems, judging by the numerous accounts we have of them, were extremely picturesque, but at the present time things have greatly altered for the worse.

A young lady of my acquaintance, who was governess some two years ago in the Hareem of a very rich gentleman at Scutari, thus described her experience to me: "Fortunately the ladies in this particular Hareem were very fond of the bath, but all day long, especially in summer, they lolled about in their nightgowns, which are often not changed once in a month. I have seen them, when they have had a reception, wearing these dirty garments under an elaborate tea-gown worth £30 or £40, or even a short jacket of the richest silk. Some of the slave girls wear very splendid costumes, made of velvet or brocade, and they are not unfrequently adorned with more jewellery than their mistresses. These ladies do absolutely nothing from morning till night but eat, drink, and

sleep. Occasionally they go for a drive in a closed brougham, and sit by the hour under the trees of some cemetery, or lounge in a caïque on the waters of the Bosphorus. One or two of them speak French fairly well, and read French novels. There was one girl in this Hareem who played the piano very nicely. But on the whole the monotony of Hareem existence is incredible. When I was ill not one of the women came near me, except a little slave girl who waited on me. This not from any feeling of unkindness, but simply because they did not know what to do in a sick-room. The number of infants who die in Turkey, through the ignorance and carelessness of their parents, is prodigious. Some three years ago I was the inmate of the Hareem of one of the most powerful and wealthiest men in Turkey, a favourite minister of the Sultan. There were sixty-two women in the Hareem, although he had only two wives himself; but besides these ladies there were the seven wives of his three sons, the Pasha's mother, and her two old sisters, and half a score of aged pauper female relatives, who, according to time-honoured Turkish custom, are clad, boarded, and lodged gratuitously. The rest of this regiment of women was made up of slaves and servants of all ages. One day the little grand-child, an infant of six, fell ill. Instead of sending for a doctor, a 'wise woman' was summoned, who performed some incantation over the fever-stricken infant, then incensed the bed above and underneath, and finally, taking out of a richly-embroidered kerchief the jaw-bone of a man, scrubbed the child all over with it.

After this she said a few prayers, then, rising from her knees, she took a spoonful of molten lead and threw it into a vessel full of water. Of course, it assumed a curious figure at the bottom; according to its shape she prophesied whether the child was to recover or not. As a matter of fact, it died in the night. The ladies in this Hareem dressed magnificently whenever they expected company, and their jewels were really splendid. But when they were among themselves, they wore their nightgowns exactly like my friends at Scutari. As a rule, these good ladies seemed to be fairly happy, and there was very little quarrelling among them. One day some very pretty slave girls were brought to the Hareem to be purchased. I was present on this occasion, and it was, I assure you, a sickening sight to see the Pasha examining them—even their teeth—as if they were young animals. They did not seem to mind it, and I am bound to admit that in all the ten years I have been a governess in various Turkish families, I have come across fewer cases of ill-treatment of servants than I did in a similar number of years in England. It is not for me," adds this lady, "to reveal what I know of the moral atmosphere of an average Turkish household, but—although I have come across a great many cases of women, and even very young girls, who had clandestine love affairs, and worse—take her all in all, the average Turkish woman, were it not for her language, which, to our minds, is most indelicate, has a right to be considered *honest*, as Shakespeare expresses it."

I believe that the Turkish population, polygamy

notwithstanding, does not increase so rapidly as the Christian. The reason for this is, doubtless, to be found mainly in the ignorance of Turkish women as to the proper way of rearing their infants, an extraordinary number of which die in babyhood. Although, in many families of the upper classes, the pernicious habit of swaddling children has disappeared, it is universal throughout the provinces and among the middle and lower classes in the metropolis. Very few wealthy Turkish women nurse their own offspring, and when the baby is ill, the Wizard, or the wise woman, is sent for more frequently than the doctor. An old Italian writer says: "It is a very remarkable fact that the Turks, who have so many women—as many, indeed, as they can maintain—have fewer children, in comparison, than the Christians, who have only one wife. It is, moreover, true that an enormous number of infants are killed in the Hareems, and their bodies buried mysteriously." The same thing is said openly in Constantinople to-day. It has frequently been observed that the Turkish man is fonder of his children than the Turkish woman. In Constantinople, in former times—and even to this day, throughout the provinces—it was exceedingly rare for a child to be allowed to embrace its father, and the greatest pleasure and the highest honour which could be conferred upon it, was to kiss his hand once or twice a day. Of late this ceremonious state of affairs has very much changed, and one now constantly meets Turkish fathers carrying their children in their arms, and caressing them publicly, at the cafés, or even in the street.

Among the lower classes, children grow up very much like the celebrated Weller Junior, whose father was so very careful with his "edikation," and consequently allowed him to run loose about the streets. They begin work when very young, and generally develop into hardy and handsome men and women. Even among the very poorest, an extreme respect for parents is noticeable. I remember once being seated at a table, close to the door of a café in a low quarter of Constantinople, and watching an old man and woman, who were resting and sipping their afternoon coffee. Suddenly a fine young workman came into the café, and perceiving them, stood still before them, made the usual salutations, and proceeded to kiss his mother's and father's hands, after which he sat down, but not before receiving their formal permission, and entered into conversation with them. I was very much amused to notice the etiquette observed, when the party prepared to leave the café. The father rose first, then the mother, and lastly the son, who stood a few paces in front of them, made his obeisance, and allowed them to pass out before him. In her delightful novel, "Hadjira," Adalet Hanum constantly refers to the custom among Turkish sons and daughters, of kissing the hem of their mother's gown, and even the hem of their father's frock-coat, which is not so picturesque as the kissing of his former wide and flowing robe. The Turk of high rank is invariably addressed by his children as "My lord," and his wife as "Effendim," or ladyship.

One day I visited a School for Orphan Boys, which

the present Sultan has established in the vicinity of the Mosque of Sultan Selim. Nothing could exceed the politeness of the children, most of them the veriest street arabs, and I was assured it never entered into their heads to play their schoolmaster any of those vulgar tricks so common among English children of the same class. They looked upon him as a superior being. The very humblest Turks, male or female, never seem to lose their dignity. They never humble themselves before the man himself, but before the position of the man, given him by God—in a word, before his *authority*. And the man in authority never seems to treat his inferior with arrogance, or condescension. Even the horrible little children who infest the mosques for no good, have respectful manners, and if asked to run an errand, do it pleasantly enough; although, if you are a Giaour, they are quite capable, when your back is turned, of calling you the vilest names, and throwing stones at you. These children are familiar with all our street games, tip-cat, pitch-and-toss, and marbles included; but they seemed to me preternaturally sharp, and even struck me as being degraded. The boys attached to the baths are mostly Circassians or Armenians. They wear strings of amber beads and charms round their necks. All of them are primitively ignorant. Those I met coming out of the various schools seemed hearty, noisy little chaps enough; but I noticed that an unusual number of them were deformed or lame. The average Turkish child appears quieter and more submissive than the Christian.

One evening, at the Embassy, I met the Count de Cholet, whose "Voyage en Turquie d'Asie" is well known and deservedly popular. He told me that at Angora and in other cities of Asia Minor, the women, both Mohammedan and Christian, were very closely veiled, and that when they saw a male European advancing towards them they invariably turned their faces to the wall until the Giaour had passed. I myself noticed this custom in the outskirts of Scutari.

A lady of my acquaintance, who occupied a position in a Turkish house, thus writes: "Once or twice I accidentally roused the jealousy of the wives of my employers, and once I was made to feel so uncomfortable that I took the advice of my employer, the Pasha, and transferred myself to another family as quickly as possible. A few years ago a young English lady was nearly poisoned in a Turkish Hareem. Every afternoon she was in the habit of taking a cup of tea, which was usually brought her by a little negro boy, who was very fond of her. She noticed that he pointed to her, in a very significant manner, not to touch the sugar. She took one lump from the vessel and afterwards had it examined. It was full of arsenic. She accepted the hint, and left within four-and-twenty hours. You have heard, I dare say, of the famous fatal cup of coffee. Do you know of what it consists? It is full of chopped hair or ground glass, and is said to be the deadliest of poisons, for it destroys, so they say, the intestines and produces a lingering death, the cause of which defies any *post mortem*."

Only the master of the house can bear witness

against his women, and in this year of grace, 1896, it is absolutely necessary in Turkey for two women to give evidence as witnesses against one man; the declarations of one female are not legal testimony.

Turkish women are allowed a good deal of a certain kind of liberty. They can remain out of doors, shopping and visiting their friends, from sunrise to sunset, without even asking their husband's permission. They can betake themselves, with their children and their attendants, to spend a week or so in the Hareem of a friend, and have only to place their boots outside the Hareem door to signify to their lord and master that they are entertaining guests. Whilst the Hareem is occupied by stranger ladies, neither husband nor son has any right to enter it. A little Turkish employé, whose salary amounts to £100 a year, told me the following curious story: "My wife," said he, "has invited the Hareem of one of her friends to spend a week with her, and yesterday afternoon, behold! there arrived at my house, with all their belongings, our neighbour's wife, his mother-in-law, three children, and five slaves. Whilst they remain in my house, I may not enter the Hareemlick, my good wife's capricious hospitality will cost me about forty livres, and I shall have to get into debt in consequence."

I had ample proofs, whilst in Constantinople, that in the case of a child's mother dying, the stepmother (or should I say mothers?) often ill-treated it. One of the daughters of the late T—— Pasha was so badly

treated after his death by the women in her brother's Hareem that she committed suicide. On the other hand, as a rule, the Turks are almost too kind and considerate, and their benevolence makes little or no distinction of rank—or, indeed, of creed. English and French governesses invariably tell the same story of the consideration and generosity with which they are treated in Turkish Hareems, always provided they do not excite jealousy.

General gadding about is dear to the heart of Turkish women, but they are not allowed to go and hear the band when it plays in the Public Gardens, or to attend theatres, concerts, or, needless to say, any of the special gatherings of Christians. Their principal public recreations are being rowed in their caïques up the Golden Horn, to the Sweet Waters of Europe, on Fridays in May, and on the Bosphorus and in the canals of the exquisitely pretty Sweet Waters of Asia in the summer months. On Fridays and Sundays in the warm weather, you will see thousands of Turkish women of all classes clustered in picturesque groups under the shade of the trees in the principal cemeteries and open spaces whence a view can be obtained. But they are always apart from the men, and, true to their Oriental instincts, invariably speak to each other in a whisper. A Turkish lady, who is an excellent English scholar, and a very fine musician, said to a friend of mine, and in my hearing: "Is it not hard that I, who am so passionately fond of music, and whose husband would be only too delighted to allow me

to do so, cannot go to a concert or an opera without endangering either my own liberty, or his prospects with the Sultan? You know," she continued, "that no female Ottoman subject can leave the Empire on any pretext whatever, and this accounts for the fact that most of the Turkish Ambassadors and Consuls at foreign Courts are Christians. As Egypt belongs indirectly to Turkey, we are, however, allowed to go there, and the freedom which we enjoy under British rule makes a winter in Cairo delightful, for we can attend the opera, the theatre, and even the racecourse. Her Highness the Princess Nazāli of Egypt, a most accomplished woman, and a relative of my own, lives like a European, and entertains ladies and gentlemen at dinner. She came to Constantinople a few months ago, and was so imprudent as to ask an old friend, Sir A—— N——, and his wife, to dine with her. On the following day Her Highness received the Sultan's orders to return to Cairo forthwith. I am a well-educated woman, I speak French and English fluently, and I am a very good musician. You can imagine nothing more painful than my existence here. I can find no kindred society. Perhaps the best educated Mohammedan women amongst my acquaintance are some of the Egyptian Princesses in the Hareem of the ex-Khedive (since dead). One or two of these ladies are really very able and well-informed; but otherwise a woman who can talk even sensibly, except on household affairs, is, as we say in Turkish, a white crow. No, the more educated a Turkish woman is, the more

unhappy she must necessarily be, until the ardent wish of Fuad Pasha is realised, and we are emancipated. Mark my words, it will not be many generations before that happens. The women of Turkey are of many races, Georgians, Circassians, Armenians, Greeks, and they are naturally very intelligent—really more so, believe me, than the men; and, moreover, there is a growing *esprit de corps* amongst us. Three years ago the Sultan issued an order that all Turkish women should wear the old-fashioned *yashmac* and *feridjé* during Ramazān. For three days the order was obeyed, but on the fourth the entire female population of Constantinople went out without them; since which time His Majesty has taken care not to interfere with our costumes. Education is spreading rapidly amongst the men, and no sensible man can tolerate the constant companionship of ignorant women. Our men are, moreover, beginning to realise the social use of women, and frequenting, as they do, the society of Christian ladies, especially those of the Diplomatic Corps, their vanity is wounded when they perceive that their own women cannot display their charms, their jewels, or their dresses in what Europeans call Society. I can assure you that if a census were taken of the number of women in Constantinople who prefer the ancient régime to what we believe will be the régime of the future, very few would vote in its favour. Is it not ridiculous that a husband cannot go out visiting or shopping with his wife, but must needs walk about a dozen yards behind her? We are not allowed to take

a drive in an open carriage, but must go in a stuffy brougham, even on the hottest day in summer. I am a rich woman, but if I took it into my head even to cross the frontier—much less to go to Vienna or Paris—I should either be arrested and brought back in disgrace, or else never permitted to see my native country again. All these antiquated regulations were useful, perhaps, in olden times, but to-day, when we Turks have to contend with the machinery of modern civilisation, they are simply as foolish as they are barbarous. There is no chance for Turkey, so long as the mothers and wives of the men who are called upon to rule our destinies remain in crass ignorance. You have no idea of the superstition which reigns among the Mohammedan women in this great city, and, indeed, throughout the entire Empire. Nothing is done without consulting a witch, a hodja, a seer, a fortune-teller, or a palmist. These rascals—many of whom are very interesting on account of the traditions they still possess, of the dark arts of bygone civilisations—literally rule the Hareems. They are the doctors and the confessors of the women."

The observations made by this well-known and very remarkable Turkish lady, no doubt accurately paint the present condition of her sisters.

There is another matter connected with the condition of the women in Turkey which deserves our brief attention, and that is the slave question. Although, during the past thirty years, the slave markets of Constantinople and of the other large Turkish cities have been formally closed, the slave

traffic, especially in females and children of both sexes, is still active. It is carried on surreptitiously at Tophané, immediately under the eye of His Imperial Majesty, whose Palace of Yildiz dominates this quarter of the city, and also in certain obscure, but well-known places in the heart of Stambul.

The Hareems continue to be peopled by slave women, but since the annexation of Circassia by Russia in 1865, that market-garden, if I might so call it, of female beauty has been virtually closed. A great number of little girls are, however, sold by the poorer classes of Circassians living on the borderland, and conveyed to Constantinople, to be disposed of privately.

A good deal of Turkish traffic in slaves is conducted in the following manner—on very well-conceived commercial principles. The wife of a Pasha, as a matter of speculation, purchases two or three little girls for a trifle, either from a slave-dealer, or some poor woman, generally a Christian, possibly a Bulgarian refugee, who is unable to bring up her own children. The lady educates each child, teaches it those accomplishments which are indispensable to Hareem life, such as singing, dancing, and playing upon musical instruments, washing, starching, ironing, embroidery, and even a little cooking. To this may be added a smattering of some foreign language, and a very elementary knowledge of Turkish caligraphy. When the child has grown up, if she is handsome, the lady turns her to account, and literally repays herself for her trouble by selling her, at a high figure, to some

Pasha of her acquaintance, through the medium of one of the well-known old women whose business it is to carry out transactions of this sort.

In more than one way slavery is an absolute necessity of Hareem life. In the first place, the servants must be slaves, for only then can they be absolutely controlled and arbitrarily punished, otherwise the master would have no power whatever over his household. As it is, it requires a good deal more vigilance than one would imagine to keep a Turkish house in order. Moreover, in polygamous households, the Hareem can only be replenished by means of slave women. These facts account for the obstinacy with which the Mohammedan world resists any attempt at the suppression of slavery, and the marvellous manner in which it defies Powers like England, France, and Germany, and still carries on the traffic clandestinely.

The slave is so necessary to the Hareem system that the very poorest man or woman must have one of some sort to do their dirty work. This slave by rights ought not to be a Mohammedan, because, according to the Koran, all true believers are equal and free.* The consequence is that an immense amount

* In connection with this subject of slavery in Turkey, it is singular to note that though the Koran expressly forbids that any Mohammedan shall be kept in slavery, the Circassians—all of them professed Moslims—have long supplied the Turks with the great majority of their most valuable female slaves.

The Georgians, also Mohammedans, have made it a practice (in the lower orders) to sell their offspring in the large towns. The Mohammedan Kurds have sent more male slaves to Turkey than any other province of the Empire.

of kidnapping is resorted to, and thousands of children are stolen annually both from Christian and Mohammedan parents, and secretly sold, sometimes for a ridiculously low price, not only in the capital, but even in the smallest villages.

In a word, all the servants in a Mohammedan house should be slaves, though of late, in some houses, Christian women servants have been employed. Of course no Mohammedan woman can act as servant in a Christian household, a fact which prevents an enormous number of women of the lower classes from earning an honest living. Many men of the lower class in Turkey accept a mitigated form of servitude, and are virtually slaves, although nominally and legally free men.

With the women it is otherwise. If a Turkish gentleman employs a woman of the lower orders in his house, that woman must be always veiled in his presence, an arrangement distinctly inconvenient both to master and to maid. But if she is a slave she is his sole property, and although she must veil herself before a stranger, it is not necessary that she should do so in the presence of her owner.

Of course, Christian women are rarely engaged as servants in a Turkish household, from the mere fact that their going about unveiled might lead to scandal. A Christian may be employed as a dressmaker, or as an extra hand in the laundry, but never as a cook or a housemaid. All that sort of domestic labour is invariably performed by slaves. Thus it comes to pass that while an immense number of aliens are fed

and clothed in the Hareems, the native free women are excluded from them, and obliged to earn their livelihood in the lowest forms of manual labour, such as we generally assign to beasts of burden. Women, for instance, may not unfrequently be seen taking the place of oxen in the plough.

The number of black female slaves is rapidly decreasing. They are usually employed in the kitchen, and are remarkable for their culinary skill. I am told they are very well treated, although occasionally, as you pass along the street, shrieks may be heard issuing from the kitchen, wherefrom you will gather that the cook is undergoing a whipping for having spoiled the pilaf. The black slaves in Constantinople are mostly a low class of Africans. They have formed a sort of club in Stambul, which enables them to hold together and protect themselves to a certain extent, and also partly to continue their old Pagan worship. The Directress of the club is known as the *Kulbachi*, and is a sort of priestess of *Yarrabox*, a kind of devil, who inspires her with a gift of prophecy, which assists her followers to find lost objects and avoid the punishments which their mistresses might otherwise inflict upon them. The *Kulbachi*, who inhabits a temple curiously decorated with bones, locks of hair, stuffed snakes, and living ones, deprived probably of their poison fangs, is held in great esteem by the Turkish women themselves, who, it is averred, sometimes pay her a visit, in order to purchase love philtres, and to dive into the future which she imparts to them after strange sorceries and incantations.

That the romance of the Hareem is not a closed chapter, the following fact, related to me by a near relative of the victim of the adventure, will prove. About five years ago one of the largest European shops in Pera, numbered among its assistants a very handsome French lad. One day, a carriage drew up to the shop, and two ladies, closely veiled, alighted, followed by an old slave woman. They made their purchases, and after paying, presented the change as backsheesh to the young Frenchman. A few days later, one of the ladies, followed by the same slave woman, drove up to the shop, but refused to alight from her carriage—the young man having to bring the goods she required to her. On this occasion the old woman slipped a piece of gold into the youth's hand. A week later, the duenna called at the shop by herself, and said her mistress was unwell, and wished the young man to bring some silk to her Hareem. It was agreed that the handsome Frenchman should meet the old woman on the bridge, and accompany her to her mistress's house, which he did. The following day, he laughingly showed his employer a superb diamond ring, which had been given him by the lady. His master begged of him, if he valued his life, not to return to the Hareem, of the exact position of which, as well as of its owner's name, he was totally ignorant—a very easy matter in Constantinople, where half the streets are nameless. The youth—unluckily for him—disobeyed the injunction, with the result that from that time to this he has never been heard of again.

Quite recently a doctor in Constantinople told me that he had considerable difficulty in inducing his more old-fashioned Turkish female patients to allow him to touch their pulse, or see their tongue, although they did not object to his seeing any other portion of their bodies—a fact which reminds me of an excellent story I heard of some Turkish ladies, who were bathing near the shore at Kadi Keni. On perceiving a boat full of European gentlemen, the ladies straightway proceeded to muffle up their faces in their towels, the rest of their costume being left in strong and undisturbed resemblance to that of the world-famed Venus de Medicis!

CHAPTER V.

THE FAILURE OF ISLAM.

STANDING one fine morning in the Mosque of Sancta Sophia, my eye was suddenly attracted by a wandering shaft of sunlight, which, falling through a lofty window, cast its radiance on the apse and revealed the great mosaic figure of Christ, otherwise obscured by a coating of the same gilded wash with which the Turks have obliterated every representation of the human form throughout the edifice. Presently the sun passed behind a cloud, the august Face faded away, and, where it had been, only a golden disc remained. On the pavement below, an Imām was intoning prayers, closely followed, and answered, by a kneeling dozen of turbaned and flowing-robed Turks from the provinces—worthy people, uncontaminated as yet by our Western civilisation, and as picturesque, consequently, as a Roberts or a Turner could have wished them. Nearer me was yet another group of devout folk, six Turkish infantrymen in the tightest of German fashioned uniforms, vainly struggling to go through the prescribed gymnastics peculiar to Mohammedan worship, without fell accidents to their garments of modern cut.

One portly gentleman, however, in his endeavour to touch the earth with his forehead, lost his balance and heeled over, to the ill-concealed merriment of his companions. "There is something wrong here," said I to myself; "evidently European costumes are inconvenient for the worship of Islām." Ampler garments are needed, indeed, for these sacred physical exercises, for this incessant rising and kneeling, and touching the earth with the forehead, during the recital of the prescribed prayers. It is the absolute and rhythmic regularity of these movements, which renders the spectacle of Divine worship in Sancta Sophia, during Ramazān, so impressive a sight. Ten thousand of the Faithful touch the earth with their foreheads, at one and the same time, and the sound of the rise and the fall of the multitude is recurrent, even as the roll of sea waves at high tide. When once all this Eastern world shall have assumed our hideous garments, then will the sense of the ridiculous—common to Moslim and Christian alike—convince the Faithful, that Allah can no longer be worshipped according to Koranic rule. Ten thousand men in frock-coats and tight-fitting trousers, trying to touch the floor with their foreheads, would, I fear, produce an impression the reverse of dignified! A series of disastrous results would inevitably extinguish the fervour of the veriest Saints of Islām!

Yet another significant incident struck me, as I quitted the mosque that day, and passed down the long street which leads to the railway terminus, and to the Great Bridge. There is a little mosque, hard by

the station, and, as I passed, a Mu'azzin on its minaret was calling the Azān.* Just then the arriving Orient Express uttered a series of piercing shrieks, which threatened to drown the quavering cadenza of the prayer crier, and the struggle which ensued between the engine's whistle, and the Mu'azzin's shrill note, marked a singular contrast, and set me thinking. A few months later, I stood once more under the dome of Sancta Sophia. Ere this, by dint of hard study, I had somewhat mastered the situation. I seemed to have lived a lifetime in this land, where, in reality, I had rested only a few months. When I visited Sancta Sophia for the last time I beheld one more contrast, the greatest, perhaps, of all—an Imām personally conducting, round the mosque, a party of fourteen Catholic nuns! Fifty years ago, the then Russian Ambassador actually had to wait six weeks, before he could obtain a firman permitting him to visit the building at all!

"But what," say you, "has all this to do with the failure of Islām?" "By the way the straws drift," I answer, "you shall know the direction of the wind. Islām is dying—Islām is dead!" Religions die hard. There is a weird legend, which relates how, nineteen hundred years ago, on that great night when Christ was born, sailors heard a wailing shriek like that of "mandrakes torn out of the earth." It rang out by the entrance to the Dardanelles, which is Homer's land, where are the ruins of Helen's Troy, backed by Mount Ida; by Athens and Corinth, along the shores of newer Greece, the wooded slopes of Etna,

* Summons to prayer.

and the Bay of Parthenope, right up to, and beyond, Ostia—out at sea. The great god Pan was dead. Fauns, satyrs, nymphs, and naiads, were yelling in the agonies of horrid death, slain in their woods and torrents, their dells and their valleys, by a little Child, born unto us at Bethlehem, on that most solemn of nights. Paganism, in the civilised lands of the West, had received its death-blow. Still, for three centuries yet, it lingered on. Nay, six hundred years were to elapse, before the last of the temples was closed; and even now, nineteen hundred years after the Death and the Resurrection, we still feel the effects of Pagan traditions, and shall do so, mayhap, even to the end of time. So will it be with Islām; it, too, is dying—dead. Christ has done His work again, but in another way. Hitherto the march of civilisation has been Westward. It started from Bethlehem and Calvary, and went forth, flooding unknown lands and continents with light. It is returning now, from Chicago, San Francisco, Sydney, to its cradle lands, slowly but surely. Slowly, because all things done by God seem to our dull comprehension to be slowly done. Therefore, I say, although Islām be dead, it may be centuries yet, before its mighty carcase is buried out of sight.

And the reason of Islām's death is, that it cannot cope with civilisation; it cannot progress. It requires no very profound knowledge of contemporary events and history, to perceive that whereas the Christian nations have advanced, those which are under the iron yoke of Mohammedanism remain stationary.

Mahomet did well, according to his lights, by the strange multitudes he saw worshipping in bestial ignorance round the Black Stone, the Ka'bah* of Mecca. But, whilst he certainly improved upon the wild theories of the Magians and Guebus (fire worshippers), who, when he appeared upon the scene, divided the Empire of the East, he bound, as it were, the heads of his followers with an iron band, which makes them incapable of absorbing new ideas. Absolutely persuaded that the Koran is the Alpha and the Omega, not only of God's revelation, but of all science, the orthodox Mohammedan despises learning, as contrary to the Divine will, and disdains those peoples who venture to lift even the corners of the veil which Allah, as he believes, has purposely drawn, to screen from vulgar curiosity and inquiry those secrets of nature which He manifestly desires shall remain shrouded in mystery. Else why has

* According to the traditions and the inventive genius of Moslim writers, the Ka'bah, or Sacred Stone of Mecca, was first constructed in heaven (where a model of it still remains, called the Baitu'l-Ma'mūr) two thousand years before the creation of the world. Adam erected the Ka'bah on earth exactly below the spot its perfect model occupies in heaven, and selected the stones from the five sacred mountains—Sinai, Al-Jūdī, Hirā, Olivet, and Lebanon. Ten thousand angels were appointed to guard the structure; but, as Burckhardt remarks, they appear to have been often most remiss in their duty! At the Deluge the Sacred House was destroyed. But the Almighty is said to have instructed Abraham to rebuild it. In its reconstruction Abraham was assisted by his son Ishmael, who with his mother Hagar, were at that time residents of Mecca, Abraham having journeyed from Syria, in order to obey the commands of God.

He not himself revealed them, upon those transcendently sacred slips of parchment which the Archangel Gabriel dropped into the lap of the Prophet, and which, when gathered together, formed the Koran? Fully persuaded that God gives fortune and power to whomsoever He chooses, regardless of birth, education, or virtue, the Mohammedan hates European progress, as a subtle enemy, which may, one day, drive him from the lands he has conquered, and deprive him of that dreamy existence so pre-eminently suited to his temperament and inclination. This retrogressive spirit is shared by all Moslims, irrespective of race and nation, for the simple reason that nationality is merged in Islāmism, and the Sudanese, the Circassian, the Georgian, the Turkoman, the Berber, the Malay, and the Egyptian, the white man and the black man, sink all racial animosity the moment they become followers of Mahomet.*

From 1250, when the era of Arabian greatness was quite extinguished, to the present day, the intel-

* The Persians, however, may be excepted, for being Shi'ahs they have retained not their nationality only but their peculiar artistic and literary genius.

The reader should not lose sight of the fact that the Mohammedan religion is divided into a great many sects. The principal divisions, however, are three: the Sunni, or Traditionists, who acknowledge the first four successors of Mahomet, and accept the Khaliphate of Stambul. According to Mr. Lane and Mr. Wilfrid Blunt they are by far the most numerous, some 154,000,000; the Shi'ahs, who do not recognise the Turkish Khaliph, and who are not more than 15,000,000, are mostly Persians; and the Wahhābis, now a very small body, centred in Asia, possessed very great importance in the early part of the eighteenth century.

lectual life of the Mohammedan nations steadily declines until every trace of its former vigour is lost for ever. Intellectual progress is impossible for a really orthodox Mohammedan. The chain round his legs pulls him back at every forward step. Each Khaliph who has attempted to better the condition of his people has either been murdered or anathematised. Selim III. tried to make reforms and was strangled; Mahmūd II. followed his example, and was cursed for his pains by every Mollah and Dervish from Stambul to Mosul. Islām hates investigation and loathes innovation.

When the Turks took possession of Constantinople they adopted, it is true, many of the manners and much of the costume of the Byzantines; but in their hands the once magnificent city became a heap of shapeless ruins, from the midst of which the seven Imperial Mosques rise in stately though plagiarised architecture, for they are mere imitations, after all, of the Byzantine Church of Sancta Sophia. They serve their purpose, however, and the stranger who sees them rising out of the Sea of Marmara, their stately domes guarded by a forest of minarets, flatters himself he is about to set foot in a fairy city. When he does land, great indeed is his disillusion! The city once "guarded by God" is now watched over by countless dogs, who pick up a precarious living on the filthy dunghills which encumber the leading thoroughfares of the Turkish capital. Everything around him is tumbling fast to ruin, a condition entirely due to that inflexible spirit of Islām, which, with its mingling of

the theological and the temporal, in every act of life, paralyses all intellectual progress.

The Christian can always find some loophole of escape from evangelical narrowness confronted by scientific investigation. The most orthodox monk or nun would not dream of teaching a pupil that the world was made in seven material days, or that Joshua actually commanded the sun to stand still. It is otherwise with the Mohammedan; he can never free himself from the Koran. If he ventures to do so, the whole fabric of his faith falls about his ears like a house of cards blown over by a ruthless schoolboy. Christian priests have attempted again and again to stifle investigation and silence the voice of reason, but they have ultimately failed, because Christianity can accommodate itself to circumstances. Our religion is no hindrance to intellectual development. Islām can produce no men to compare with our great reformers and scientists, for from their birth she has deprived her sons of their rightful inheritance of individuality and independence. In her system they are mere machines, soldiers who may win Heaven by dying for the green standard of their Prophet, but who must never stop to reason. A Turkish gentleman once said to me: "You Europeans strive to know too much; you are too restless, too inquisitive. You actually seek to find out what the tempest is made of —we bow our heads, and thank Allah if it spares our houses and our flocks."

I may be accused of being too sweeping in my condemnations of Islām, and some of my readers,

pointing to that remarkable epoch of civilisation, the Arabian, which lasted from the middle of the eighth to the end of the thirteenth century, may declare the present stagnant condition of the Mohammedan world to be merely transitory, and insist that with increased facilities the Islāmite, while still preserving his faith, will soon be in a position to accept the revelations of the most advanced scientists and thinkers. Islām is a far simpler religion, it may be argued, than the Catholic, Orthodox, or Armenian. After all, is it not a form of Deism? Is not its ritual as plain as that of the Quaker or the Unitarian? Is not its morality based on the teachings of Christ, whom Mohammedans venerate as the greatest of all prophets, Mahomet alone excepted? I answer that although on the surface these statements appear correct enough, in reality they are very far from being so. It may be granted that during six centuries Mohammedan civilisation was higher, in appearance at least, than that of contemporary Christendom. But when we study the question closely we soon discover that there never has been any period of true Islāmic progress, and that this boasted Arabian civilisation was no emanation of Mohammedan genius, but the mere outcome of a tacit revolt against the Koran and its teachings, similar to the movement against Christian orthodoxy which took place in Rome in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries under the Popes of the earlier Renaissance, when the external forms of religion were scrupulously observed, only to be scoffed at by the "Initiated" in their secret conclaves. I have been particularly struck

in the course of my study of the history of the Mohammedan religion, with the extraordinary resemblance between the Baghdad of Harun-al-Rashid and the Rome of Leo X., at the period of that strange attempt to Hellenise Christian society.

Islām certainly did not progress intellectually under its four first Khaliphs and their successors, the Ommiades. The genius of the Faith was then purely militant, its missionaries the scimitar and the slave-dealer. The peoples conquered by Mohammedan valour were forced either to accept the Crescent or to perish by the sword; and their children were sold as slaves, only to be liberated when they had learnt the Koran by heart.

During the first hundred years of its existence, Islām had but one object—conquest. In 750 A.D., the Persians overthrew the last representative of the Ommiades, and placed the son of Abbas on the throne of the Khaliphs, thereby creating a new dynasty, that of the famous Abassides. These Princes originally fixed their residence on the banks of the Euphrates, a region rich in the tradition of many successive eras of civilisation, of which the latest, that of the Persian Sassanidæ, was by far the most brilliant. Here Chosroes Nuschirvan reigned. An ardent admirer of ancient literature, this enlightened Prince, availing himself of the fact that the learned in Constantinople were absorbed in those hair-splitting disputes on points of doctrine, which eventually led to the great schism of Photius, sent emissaries to its hundred monasteries, to ransack their treasures for

those priceless Greek manuscripts of the most glorious period of Hellenic literature, which the monks were degraded enough to sell for small sums, or exchange for carpets and pieces of silk.

In his eager pursuit of learning, Chosroes did not neglect India, and thence came cargoes of richly-illuminated scrolls of philosophy and poetry. The majority of this wise King's subjects were Nestorian Christians, not only well-versed in Hellenic philosophy, but in astronomy, geometry, and above all, in the science of medicine. They soon found lucrative employment in translating into Persian the precious volumes entrusted to them for that purpose. Suddenly, like a hideous destroyer, Islām fell upon this busy hive, and ruthlessly dispersed its workers. For a hundred years or more, the precious manuscripts lay untouched—save, perhaps, by some poor Nestorian scholar—on the shelves of the libraries attached to the various mosques, among which they had been distributed. In 750, as I have already stated, the Abassides ascended the throne of the Khaliphs. The founder of this dynasty, Al-Abbas, his successor, Mansur, and, above all, the illustrious Harun-al-Rashid, surrounded themselves with learned Persians and Christians. Apparently, even at that remote period, the Mohammedan could not do without the Giaour, and Baghdad, "that Paris of the East" in the ninth century, must in some measure have resembled the Stambul of to-day, where every branch of administration, from the Palace to the police court, is controlled by Armenians, Greeks, Catholics, Le-

vantines, and French, Russian, German, and English employés. The Ministers and Councillors of the earlier Abassides were invariably chosen from members of the enlightened Barmecide,* a family of ancient Persian origin, distinguished for its liberal views and universal knowledge. Baghdad, therefore, under Harun-al-Rashid, being entirely, so far as its official administration was concerned, in the hands of Persians, Nestorians, and Jews, the orthodoxy of the Commander of the Faithful himself became singularly modified. The excessive toleration of the Prince of the Abassidian dynasty attracted all sorts and conditions of men to Baghdad, and the city of Harran—one of the few which remained absolutely Pagan and Hellenic—sent the majority of its learned men to seek fortune in the capital of the Khaliphs, concerning which a pious traveller of the ninth century writes: "Here nobody pretends to believe in anything but material pleasure." Under such a wide-sleeved policy, letters revived, and sprang up like mushrooms in a rich, damp meadow under a glorious morning sunshine. The mental activity of the city became prodigious. The motley but thriving population† was allowed to think and express itself as

* Harun, according to the historian, Al-Tabari, put the whole Barmecide family to death, with the exception of three sons—Yahyu, Mohammed, and Al Fazel. The pretext for the massacre was, most probably, their well-known unorthodox views, and its object, the confiscation of their prodigious wealth.

† The population was enormous, as great as that of modern London. Over 800,000 fell victims to Huláku Khan in 1258.

it chose, providing always that it did not outrage the external forms of the official religion.

The Khaliphs were very observant of the Friday State visit to the mosques, of the Feast of Ramazān, and of all the great festivals connected with Islāmic worship, but otherwise Baghdad was a hotbed of Neoplatonism and Gnosticism. Sometimes the rein was tightened for a while and the general laxity received some check, but ere long the old materialistic spirit resumed its sway. When we read the history of the three great Khaliphs, Mansur, Harun-al-Rashid, and Maïmoun, in the light of these facts, we immediately obtain the key to the unorthodox manners and freedom of intercourse between the sexes, so contrary to the Koran, which form the chief characteristic of, and lend much of their attraction to, the "Arabian Nights" as translated by Sir Richard Burton.* It was not long after my return from the East that I formed my first acquaintance with that astonishing storehouse of Oriental ethnology. About the first thing that struck me, in reading such a story as the "Three Ladies and the Porter," and their gay orgies, was that it described a condition of affairs which would be quite impossible in any Turkish city in the nineteenth century, even in modern Constantinople, where no Turkish woman would dare conduct herself after the fashion of those very emancipated ladies with their friends the Porter, the three Khalanders, sons of Kings, and the Khaliph, the ever

* See the story of the "Three Ladies of Baghdad and the Porter," vol. i., "Arabian Nights," in any good translation.

delightful Harun-al-Rashid. Chance brought me a solution of the mystery in the shape of Dozy's translation of an account of Baghdad, by a pious Spanish traveller who was there in the latter half of the ninth century. "Here," says he, "are many societies (clubs) called Motécallemîn, in which theological subjects are treated with a flippancy which has greatly shocked me. I visited two of these places, which were packed with Catholics, Greeks, Armenians, and especially with Mohammedans of various sects. Each body had its chief, and the principal object of the meeting (God forgive them) was to prove that all religions are false. 'We are not assembled here,' cried the speaker, 'to confirm any form of religious belief—everybody must appeal to reason.'" These words, it seems, were loudly applauded, and the horrified traveller adds plaintively: "I went away trembling. I visited yet one or two other places of this sort, and it was always the same scandal." In the sixteenth century, there were similar associations all over Italy, even in Rome itself. Far from Baghdad this liberal spirit had spread itself abroad. The Christian Churches of the East, already in sad need of drastic reform, were squabbling over texts, and neglecting morals. Their controversies concerning the dual nature of Christ, the procession of the Trinity, and the worship of images, scandalised their enemies, when they did not provoke contempt and derision. Islām itself was divided into many sects, some of which, the Zindite for instance, went so far as to deny not only the revelation of the Koran, but the existence of the

God who inspired it. This condition of thought was undoubtedly the result of the dissemination of Greek literature, through Arabic translations, made, for the most part, by Christians, and not by Mohammedans. On to these translated versions, certain theorists embroidered, or perhaps merely invented, speculations of their own. Alkindi, for instance, made an Arabic version of Aristotle, to suit the people. Alpharabi and Avicenus edited Arabic versions of the encyclopædias of Euclid, Galenus, and Ptolemy.

Chemistry and astronomy, and all the learning and development resulting from Hellenic research, were encouraged to shed their light to as far as Cairo, Damascus, Cordova, and Granada. Old Greece had come to life again, muffled in a caftan and crowned by a turban. In Rome and Paris, a volume of Aristotle or Galenus might have been sought for in vain, but in the bazaars of Baghdad, you would have found a hundred copies. There is nothing, in the history of our race, more curious than this itineracy of Greek literature from Athens to Rome and Constantinople, thence to Harran and Baghdad, and viâ Granada, Cordova, and Toledo, to Paris and London. The Asia which sent us our Christ has also preserved us our Aristotle. When Averroes, the last great Arabian philosopher, died in Morocco, neglected and alone, Europe was already basking in the light of the Gospel, and in the reviving beams of classical literature.

The Abassides were overthrown, and the Turkish Ottomans succeeded them. Then the reaction set

in. Not more effectual than the Spanish Inquisition was the merciless system of Ottoman fanaticism, which, when it failed to stifle intellectual progress by artful conspiracy, stamped it out ruthlessly with fire and sword. The severance, too, between the Eastern and Western Churches caused almost absolute intellectual stagnation in Constantinople long before its fall, and reacted upon the whole of Western Asia. The Crusaders, who under other circumstances would have been welcomed by the Byzantines as brothers, were, after the separation of the Greek and Latin Christians, looked upon as heretics and enemies. And when they did possess themselves of the "thrice holy city, guarded of God," instead of respecting its libraries, its monasteries, and even its churches, they sacked every building, and destroyed every book and work of art they could not carry off. If the Byzantines had bestowed more care on their literary treasures, from the eighth to the twelfth centuries, Byzantium would have become, once more, what it had been under the earlier Emperors—a seat of philosophy and learning, whence the Renaissance would, in all probability, have leaped to life some five hundred years sooner than it eventually did in Florence and Rome. But Byzantium preferred narrow theological disputes to wide intellectual horizons, encouraged frivolous, not to say scandalous, pleasures rather than learning, and thereby put back progress, and dug her own grave. With the barrier of the luxurious non-progressive Byzantine Empire between Islām and European civilisation — such as that was,

even in those remote times—the Mohammedan world, after the one flash of progress in Arabia, to which I have referred, retroceded by two thousand years, and the story of the Turkish Empire from Orkhān's days, in the fourteenth century, to these present times, reads exactly like that of the long period of ancient history, during which a certain refinement in customs and costume merely served to conceal general habits of barbarism. It recalls, in a manner, Semitic history under the Kings. In the very year in which Raymond, Archbishop of Toledo, commanded that Latin translations should be undertaken of the principal Arabic works to be found in the libraries of his diocese, among them Aristotle, the Turkish Khaliph made a bonfire of all the Greek manuscripts he could lay hands on throughout his dominions. From 1250 to the present day, the intellectual life of the Moslim community steadily declines, until every trace of its former vigour is lost for ever; and this, notwithstanding the many attempts made, at various epochs, to reform Islām, almost invariably on agnostic lines. The famous Arabian movement in the tenth century, upon which I have already dwelt, was absolutely unorthodox. Passing over the efforts made with partial, but not durable, success, under Suleymān II., to separate the ecclesiastical from the civil law, the admixture of which was the fatal legacy of Mahomet, I will briefly mention the Wahhābi reform, which assumed such an alarming aspect at the beginning of this century. It owed its origin to Mohammed ibn Abd-ul-Wahhāb,

of Ayināh, in Najd (Arabia), who had been carefully instructed by his father in the tenets of the Hanbalī sect. A visit to Mecca, where he placed himself at the feet of the illustrious Sheikh Abdu'llah ibn Ibrāhim, led to his discovering the many irregularities which had crept into Islām, especially among the Turks, to be utterly at variance with the true teachings of the Prophet. The belief in Walis, Pirs, and Saints, the adoration of relics, the worshipping at tombs, the luxury, especially of the Turks, disgusted him, and he resolved to rid the Faith of all these obnoxious excrescences. He forthwith began publicly to interpret the Koran, in a purely human sense, without the addition of any supernatural element, or acknowledgment of pretended Divine inspiration. The early struggles of his reform were great, and it remained in obscurity until the close of the century, when it assumed prominence, thanks to the military genius and energy of Sheikh Sa'ud, the son of Abd-ul-Aziz, and grandson of Abd-ul-Wahhāb. He roused the ardour of his warrior followers to absolute frenzy. Their battle-cry was "Death to the infidels who give a companion to God," an allusion to the doctrine of the Founder, who preached that the Prophet had no right to Divine honours and mystical pretensions. They soon formed a powerful and fanatical army. "The Turks have made a God of their Prophet," they cried, "and pray before his tomb as idolators do before a fetish. They surely deserve to be put to the sword. Let us strangle them!" The three Arabias rose in arms, and Emir Sa'ud, at the head of

a hundred thousand armed missionaries, after massacring the Turkish garrison in many towns—toleration was certainly not included in their reforms—marched on to Mecca, entered the city, violated the tomb, and in unconscious imitation of Savonarola, so worked upon the popular imagination that every object of luxury—tobacco, scents, jewels, silks, and satins—was brought into the public squares and there burned, in token of penance and acceptation of the rigid doctrine of the austere sectarians. Soon the annual pilgrimages of the Samū to the Ka'bah were interrupted, the unfortunate pilgrims being invariably waylaid and massacred by these fanatical but free-thinking Wahhābis. Sultan Mahmūd II. decided at last to put an end to this state of affairs, and to annihilate heretics whose doctrines and fanaticism kept his subjects in a perpetual ferment of excitement. He entrusted the mission of extermination to Mehemet Ali of Egypt, who accepted it, but first took care to rid himself of those Janissaries of the Nile—the Mamelukes. In 1807, on the eve of the departure of his son, Tacum Pasha, on his Arabian mission, he invited the doomed, though unconscious, Mamelukes to a banquet, which, as all the world knows, proved their last earthly meal—they were massacred to a man. The settlement of the Wahhābi question turned out nothing like so easy as Mehemet Ali had imagined, and it was not till 1818 that the pilgrimages were resumed with safety. There is now excellent evidence to prove that the Wahhābis are decreasing in number. They made the fatal blunder of deforming

their liberal doctrines by a hideously cruel fanaticism, and in due time received the usual reward of so unnatural an experiment.* The labours of Abd-ul-Wahhāb and of Emir Sa'ud have not, however, been entirely vain. They have won for themselves a comparison with Calvin and Luther, and the spirit of reform which they roused, still manifests itself in the continued unrestfulness of the Mohammedan world—especially in India and Southern Asia. But in its cradle land, Arabia, Wahhābism has failed. Its teachings were too broad for the Sons of the Desert to grasp, and it has gradually faded. Wherever the Ottoman rule is paramount, it is invariably persecuted, and thus, like so many other attempts at reform in Islām, it has turned out to be a Dead Sea apple.

One fine spring evening in May, 1894, I was sitting in my room, by a window overlooking the *Petit champ des morts* (the "little field of the dead"), now used as a public garden, beyond which basked, in the golden light of the setting sun, the fading outline of Stambul. Suddenly my door was opened, and a young Sheikh, whose name is familiar from one end of the East to the other, and well-known also in the West, stole into the chamber, looking cautiously behind him, as if in fear that some one was following. He had come, he said, to talk with me on a subject near his heart — the possibility of reforming Islām, and of adapting it to the exigencies of our age. He was full of hope,

* According to Mr. Wilfrid Blunt they do not number now more than ten to eleven millions.

and of apparently practical ideas. He had invented a sort of catechism of faith and morals, which he wished to introduce into the infant schools, to replace those detached verses of the Koran which the majority of little Turkish children have to learn by heart, mechanically, and in Arabic, which they do not understand, for it is contrary to rule for the Koran to be translated into the vulgar tongue.

We conversed, by the window, for an hour, he with an enthusiasm and an earnestness peculiarly Oriental, occasionally rising, and pacing up and down the room, and re-seating himself, talking all the while in Italian, with wonderful fluency, and exhibiting a familiarity not only with his own religion, but with the various sects of Christianity, which amazed and almost bewildered me. Presently it appeared to me that Mahomet and the Koran were receding, and that in their place, in the *mind* of the speaker at least, Voltaire and the "Vie de Jésus" were assuming undue prominence. My hitherto orthodox Sheikh was rapidly becoming an agnostic. In due course he reduced Islām to its simplest expression.

A translation of the Koran was on the table between us. Pointing to it, I asked him abruptly: "On your honour, as man to man, and by your Prophet, Sheikh, do you believe in this book?"

"In the truths which it contains, yes; but, honestly, not in its miraculous origin," was his unhesitating answer.

"Then," said I, "you are no longer one of the Faith; you have placed yourself outside the dogmas of

your creed, and you are criticising them, inadvertently, perhaps, as an independent witness."

"Perhaps so," he replied, and then, with a smile, "I am afraid you are right."

Presently he said: "Are they not doing the same thing with Christianity—in France, in Germany, and even in England, where you are so Conservative that the boldest theories are masked in language so respectful as to make it difficult to discern the exact meaning your great thinkers desire to express, so eager are they not to wound the susceptibilities of their readers? But the poison is all the more subtle. Is not the thinking world of our day, in the West as well as in the East, tearing Bible and Koran alike into fragments in its desperate struggle to discover truth? Perchance, out of the Faiths of the Past will arise the Religion of the Future! Surely," he added, presently detaching a small crucifix from the wall beside my bed, "you do not believe in this?"

"I see no reason why I should not," I replied. "I believe in Him it represents, absolutely. You have denied your Koran, good Sheikh, but I am not going to deny my Cross! I am no bigot, and I bow willingly before what is good and great in your faith; but, my friend, when I study the past of your nation, contrasted with its present, when I behold the ruined East, seated as it were upon a dust-hill, in unchanging apathy and inertness, incapable of resisting the encroachments of modern civilisation; when I see these things, and call to mind the spread of humanitarianism in the West, the wonderful order of our cities, our

scientific progress, our hospitals, our charities, our vigour, intellectual and commercial, I recognise that these things emanate directly from Him who is represented on this Cross. They are the outcome of the light and liberty He gave to the world—and the dust-heaps, and howling dogs, and the darkness of Stambul yonder, are the results of the teaching of your Prophet, and of his Koran."

"Then," replied the Sheikh, "you consider yourself to be of the children of light, and we of the children of darkness?"

"We are all of us," I replied, "of the children of light, and every year sees, and shall see, the light strengthen, little by little, until its brightness shall destroy all bigotry, and wipe out all error and fraud. Already it is preparing the whole human family for a brighter future. The light will penetrate into the far East, believe me, for civilisation is surely, if slowly, returning whence it came. Although you and I shall not see the glory of it, it shall come to pass, and then much that is contained in this Koran of yours, will have done its work towards the accomplished progress of the human family. Therefore despise not my crucifix, and I will acknowledge the good which is in your Koran."

"So be it," said the Sheikh, and he laid my crucifix on the Koran.

Then, after a pause, he looked out of the window. In the foreground the band was playing, a crowd of Europeans and Levantines, with their wives and families, were enjoying the breeze, and listening to

Strauss's waltzes. The Golden Horn lay black, and the shadowy outline of Stambul had vanished into the darkness—not a single light was burning, though nine o'clock had not yet struck. The immense population of nearly a million souls had already gone to rest.

"Stambul," observed the Sheikh sadly, as we shook hands, "looks like a city of the dead."

"Yes," said I, as I conducted him to the door, "be not offended if I say it—it sleeps already—the city of a dead Faith!"

Islām is dying—Islām is dead! After its own fashion, it has done its duty valiantly. Let it not be spoken of otherwise than reverently. Still, into the phantom land of dead creeds it must surely pass, to take its station amid the ghosts of the thousand religions which have preceded it, and for each of which, millions of earnest lives have been willingly poured out like water. There is no ruin so august, so mighty, as the ruin of a Faith, with all its eternal hopes crushed, with all its pomp and majesty reduced to a mere matter of archæological research. I never visit a ruined temple, without feeling an overmastering sense of melancholy awe. Often, when standing under the dome of a Mohammedan mosque, have certain lines from Pope's "Universal Prayer" come back to me:

> Father of all! in ev'ry age,
> In ev'ry clime adored,
> By saint, by savage, and by sage,
> Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LATTER-DAY TURKS.

THE purpose of this chapter is not to define the origin of the Moslim subjects of the Sultan, nor to enter into the details of their past history. An endeavour has been made, in various parts of this book, to give a few pen sketches of life in old Stambul, when it was still flooded with that brilliant light of Eastern pageantry and romance, of which so little now lingers on the shores of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus; and the Turks, in this chapter, will be spoken of as they appeared "at home" in their capital.

To begin with, it should be remarked that the surest way to insult an Ottoman gentleman is to call him a "Turk." His face will straightway wear the expression a Londoner's assumes, when he hears himself frankly styled a Cockney. He is no Turk, no savage, he will assure you, but an Ottoman subject of the Sultan, by no means to be confounded with certain barbarians styled Turcomans, and from whom indeed, on the male side, he may possibly be descended. As a matter of fact, the Turk's ancestry, in the female line at least, is very mixed indeed. His mother may have been an Armenian, his grandmother

a Circassian or a Georgian, and his great-grandmother a Greek. He himself, although he be a Pasha, or even a Grand Vizir, may not have a single drop of true Ottoman blood in his veins. His nationality is not Turkish, nor even Ottoman—it is Islāmic. For from the moment his lips have pronounced the sacred formula, "There is but one God, and Mahomet is His Prophet," his descent is merged in his religion, and he becomes one of the immense brotherhood or guild of Islām. He has no country. The word Fatherland—"patria"—does not exist in the Turkish language. It is replaced by the sacred term "Islām." Wherever a minaret rises, there is the Ottoman's home. The Bulgarian and Servian refugees never once regretted, after the war which expelled them from their homes, the countries in which their childhood had been spent. Following, and very literally too, the example of the man in the Scripture story who "took up his bed and walked," they packed up their mattresses and their carpets and marched, without a sigh or tear, to find a new resting-place, where some minaret reared its tapering form above the wooden huts that nestled at its feet.

When a company of Turks settle in a place, their first care is to build a mosque and a minaret, and round these they pitch their camp, ready to move on at any moment, if necessary, leaving the sacred tower to crumble into ruin,* for no human hand may pull it

* This accounts for the existence in Stambul, Galata, and Pera of a number of minarets standing alone, minus the mosque of which they once formed part.

down—it must be left to time and natural decay. Somewhere in the first half of the last century the Baron de Tott asked the then Grand Vizir, "If the Turks were obliged to evacuate Stambul, would they greatly regret their exile?" "Not at all," replied His Highness; "Asia is very beautiful, and yonder shores beyond Scutari offer delightful sites whereon to build our Konaks, among the cypress and the plane trees."

As a matter of fact, there is no reason why a Turk should particularly care for his birthplace. His house may be a very happy, even a luxurious one, but it has none of those associations which make the poorest home, be it ever so humble, dear to us here in the West. He has not even a family name. There are very few Turks in Constantinople who could tell you who their grandfather, far less who their great-grandfather was—unless he happened to be some very remarkable man indeed—and it may be doubted whether any living Turk could trace his descent from even such illustrious persons as those famous Grand Vizirs and Pashas, Cicala, Köprili-Mohammed, Köprili-Ahmed-Hussein, Kutchuk-Hussein, or Baraïcktar, whose renown once filled the world. It is impossible for a man who has no surname, and is simply known by some such distinctive title as "Ahmed, the son of Ali"—"Ibrāhim, who lives by the Adrianople Gate"—"Selim with the hump"—"Kutchuk (or little) Saïd"—"Hassan Pasha, with the broken nose"—or "Duad, the son of old Helmi, who was the son of the Grand Vizir who lived near Agia Sophia," to count back his pedigree. After

a generation or so all trace of ancestry is utterly lost. It must be remembered that not a few of the very greatest personages in the Empire have sprung from so low a station, that they could not furnish a clue to their father's parentage to save their very lives. In this respect at least the condition described in the "Arabian Nights" still exists. The closest friends and admirers of Abd-ul-Hamid have risen from the very humblest positions. One gentleman, for instance, was bought by Sultan Aziz in the slave market at Tophané, another was a clown in a travelling circus, a third is the son of a pastry-cook, a fourth spent his youth in a Karagheuz show, a fifth was a boot-black. Chance favoured them, and now they wear glittering uniforms, and are Field Marshals and Ministers, Secretaries and Chamberlains, and Excellencies all!

The story of that admirable man, Helmi Pasha, is a case in point. He was a lad of twelve, when in 1825 a fearful massacre of Christians took place in his birthplace, the lovely island of Chio. The order had gone forth to slay adults only, and to spare the women and children. The boy was brought to Constantinople, and sold as a slave to Sultan Mahmūd II., who, perceiving his exceptional intelligence, sent him to Paris to be educated. On his return he was given an excellent post in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in due time rose to be one of the most illustrious of Grand Vizirs. One day an old beggar woman presented herself at the gates of the Sublime Porte, and begged an audience of His Highness, who, with true Oriental courtesy, ordered

her to be admitted. She soon convinced him of the fact that he was her own son, torn from her in the terrible massacres which preceded the Greek War of Independence. The Grand Vizir ordered her to be conducted to his house, and installed in her rightful position as mother of the lord of the Hareem, which, according to Mohammedan etiquette, is even more august than that of Buyuk Hanum, or First Wife. The son of this capable Grand Vizir, and excellent man, is, if I mistake not, Hamdi Bey, a gentleman who has rendered inestimable service to art and archæology in his native city, and to whom we owe the preservation of many precious monuments, and the institution of a Museum of Antiquities in the heart of Stambul.

The Ottoman is at once the most democratic and the most aristocratic of men. He treats his inferiors, his very slaves, as he treats his equals: with the same etiquette and the same consideration. But, should he find himself in an exalted station, he expects Oriental reverence to be paid to his authority. The slave, on the other hand, never encroaches, and yet there is no absolute servility. The poorest Moslim subject of the Sultan, if suddenly brought before the Pādishāh, may be relied on to behave with dignity and self-possession. He will never lose his head, he will know instinctively what to do, and how to comport himself. The fine manners of all classes of Mohammedans in Constantinople were a constant source of admiration to me. It was as if the grace and dignity of past times—of the Courts of the eighteenth century—had taken refuge in Stambul.

Your Caïqje, your Cafeje, and the very boot-blacks (if they are Mohammedans) know how to be unobtrusively polite and well-bred towards each other, and even towards the Giaour himself, if he treats them civilly. The older fashioned, the more prejudiced the Turkish gentleman, the finer are his manners, the more gracious and delightful his welcome. His hospitality—in the good old times, before Abd-ul-Hamid rendered it impossible for his Turkish subjects to mingle with Europeans—was splendid, or simple, according to his means, but always hearty. The Turkish gentleman has a wit of his own. Years ago, when Monsieur de Noailles was French Ambassador, Fuad Pasha gave a splendid entertainment at his villa at Candali, to which the élite of Pera was invited. The Marquise de Noailles, a lady renowned for her beauty, while walking in the illuminated gardens, leaning on the arm of her host, suddenly expressed a wish to visit the Hareem—the ladies of which were entertaining their friends. The Pasha was leading his fair guest towards the door of the ladies' apartments, when Monsieur de Noailles thrust himself forward and asked if he might be included in the party. "Non, Excellence!" replied Fuad, "vous n'êtes accrédité qu'à la Porte!"

Another Turkish gentleman, describing to me one of the most beautiful Englishwomen of our time, whose exquisite face blooms like a flower set on a tall and willowy stalk, exclaimed: "Yes, she is quite charming—*une miniature sur le plafond.*" Personally the writer has only praise and grateful memory for

the few Turkish gentlemen he was fortunate enough to meet. Their courtesy and kindness were unvarying, and the charm of conversation and manner, of those in exalted positions, with whom he had the honour of some — though no very intimate — intercourse, appeared to him very remarkable.

Under the present deplorable régime, it is absolutely dangerous for a Turkish gentleman to be seen talking to a foreigner. The fact is at once reported to the Palace by some one or other of the miserable spies who infest the city, making life, for Turk and Giaour alike, a hell on earth. The offender, if he is an official, is liable to lose his salary, and even to be imprisoned, although the conversation may have dealt only with the veriest trivialities of everyday life.

Turning to the lower orders, the same fine qualities are apparent: courtesy, frugality, sobriety, patience, industry, kindness to animals and children, and a far higher sense of honour and truthfulness than will be found in a corresponding class among the Christians. The Greek and the Armenian shopkeepers will almost invariably cheat you, but the Mohammedan never — unless, indeed, contact with Western civilisation has absolutely demoralised him. I cannot but repeat what every other traveller has said before me. There is no finer people in the world, than the lower orders of the Mohammedan population of Constantinople. Fanatical they are indeed, and to the last extent. The entire nation, in fact, save some few thousands of educated men, belonging to the last two generations, are in much the same

intellectual condition as that which prevailed in England during the eleventh century.

Human suffering is such a customary spectacle in Turkey, that it has lost all its horror to those who have for generations been inured to the hideous spectacle.

The very family which will hospitably receive a wearied traveller, wash his dusty feet, give him the best divan, literally kill the fatted (perhaps the only) sheep for his express benefit, and refuse to accept one piastre in acknowledgment of its kindness, will, if the said traveller appear to it an active enemy of Islām—not of the Faith only, but of the nationality—fall upon him, tear him in pieces, flay him alive, with a refinement of torture that baffles belief, and will not bear recounting. And why? Because the nation is neither educated nor civilised.

We ourselves—if, indeed, we have made much progress now—were no better a little over a hundred years ago. There was no expression of horror in the London newspapers and magazines, which detailed the appalling tortures inflicted on the miserable half-witted Amien, for three long days, to the huge entertainment of a surging Parisian crowd, and before the very doors of God's church,* in punishment of his attempt on the life of His Most Sacred Majesty, Louis XV. They flayed the poor wretch, they burnt him with drops of hot lead, they broke him on the wheel, they tormented him to a lingering death, and yelled with laughter when he piteously cried

* Nôtre Dame de Paris.

out for a drop of water to cool his swollen tongue. No one was horrified! No English pen took up his cause! Not a hundred years ago, here in London, near where the Marble Arch now stands, scores of men were sent into eternity for sheep-stealing. A little later, a woman was hanged for stealing a yard of flannel to cover her new-born babe. It is not so very long since the days of good Elizabeth Fry, who first attempted to reform the appalling condition of British prisons; and it is only fifty years since Charles Dickens wrote his never-to-be-forgotten description of the orgy round the scaffold, at the execution of the Mannings. Nay, only a year ago, when a woman was hanged at the Old Bailey, a London mob gathered without the jail, where it could not actually behold her writhing form, behaved not so very differently from the Turks, and only lacked opportunity, it may be feared, to prove itself no whit more civilised than the fanatics who have lately hacked 100,000 Armenians to death. Nor should we forget that, in the year of grace 1897, an unoffending Armenian refugee has been kicked to death by London roughs, because, forsooth, they considered him to be a foreign "interloper."

Mahmūd II. made a fatal mistake when he permitted his Ottoman subjects to change their costume, to doff the turban and the caftan for the fez and the redingote. So long as the Turk wore his Oriental robes, he was comprehensible. We forgave his blunders, and we even overlooked his cruelty. We took him as an Asiatic who had come too close to Europe. But at all events, we knew where we stood.

Once the present masquerade began, confusion worse confounded fell on Turk and Giaour alike. An Armenian massacre, conducted by Islāmic fanatics, garbed in semi-barbaric paraphernalia, might have been partially condoned. But the spectacle of a mob in frock-coats and suits of dittos, torturing their fellow-citizens, and cutting their throats, is a thing we cannot pardon. We forget that the habit does not make the monk, and that ninety-nine Turks out of each hundred are still barbarians.*

A far more serious matter than a mere change of national costume is the corruption of the Turkish Government. Education, especially amongst Mohammedans, has by no means made such strides in the Turkish Empire as we are sometimes led to believe. The failure of Islām, as regards the progress of its sons, and the danger, from the Islāmic point of view, which education must be to Moslim faith and morality, have been dwelt on elsewhere. Those Turks who receive a modern education, either in Paris or London, or at the Galata Seraï in Pera, invariably turn out absolute atheists, or else, after a few years of life "á la franka" of the most dissolute description, they retrograde utterly, and become fanatics of the worst sort. The vast bulk of the Islāmic population, so we are officially assured, is educated in public

* A very able Turkish gentleman was once heard to remark that the enforcement of the law binding all Ottoman subjects to wear the fez was a very great mistake. It prevents their amalgamating with the foreign elements of the population, naturally the most advanced in culture, if not in morality.

schools attached to the mosques, or in other establishments subsidised by Government. This may be perfectly true, but the question is, what sort of education is so bestowed? It takes a man nine years to learn to write the Turkish language respectably. He has to waste at least four in "cramming" the Arabic Koran (which he cannot understand) by rote, because, forsooth, the Koran may not lawfully be translated. The children in the Mohammedan schools in Stambul appear docile in the extreme, and the teachers patience itself; but a very small amount of observation reveals the fact that the whole performance is a farce—that the excellent teacher is profoundly ignorant, and the children merely parrot learners.

I was once invited to visit a charity school near the mosque of Sultan Selim, a most elaborate establishment. It is an immense building, surrounded by a well-kept garden, where gratuitous education is given to some 250 orphan boys. No school in London or New York contains a finer collection of mathematical and scientific instruments, but not a soul knows even how to set them up, much less to explain their uses. So there they stand, in huge glass cases, to be admired as objects of great value and curiosity, and the boys, probably, hold them endued with some power, into which they may not lightly inquire. Here, too, is a drawing school, full of models, engravings of various kinds, and casts of the human form. These the scholars copy with extraordinary exactness. A child of twelve reproducing a lithograph of Windsor Castle in pen and ink, worked with such precision that it was

by no means easy to distinguish the copy from the original.

The Sultan has done a good deal for education, but there is no creating skilled teachers, and the best endowed schools in the world must be dangerous failures, unless the professors are experienced and capable. In consequence of the Sultan's prejudice—perhaps not an unnatural one — against Christian teachers, the education of the Mohammedan population of the Turkish Empire is doomed to remain a mere illusion.

There is a well-attended school of medicine in Stambul, but it has not, as yet, produced a single doctor of remarkable eminence. So with the schools of agriculture, law, and fine arts. Enormous sums are spent upon them, with little or no result. Education in Turkey, as described in such fulsome pamphlets as "Comment on sauve un Empire," is one thing—its practice is another. Even if these Ottoman schools were blessed with staffs of professors superior to those of Oxford, Cambridge, and the Sorbonne, but little could be done under the present régime. The censorship would soon muzzle the teachers. The Superior of the Jesuit College in Pera showed me one morning some of his newly-imported books, just rescued from the clutches of the Custom House officials, who, by the way, are nearly all of them Armenians. One-half, at least, of the type was effaced — all allusions to Christ, for instance, to Turkish history, to the Revolution, had been struck out with indelible ink. Fortunately,

the Christian schools being mostly under some direct foreign protection, or in the hands of ecclesiastics protected by France and Austria, the teaching staff can generally contrive to get their books safely into their hands, minus the officious attentions of the Turkish Custom House officials, who really only interfere in the matter for the sake of the backsheesh they expect, in case they pass the books unchallenged.

Whilst Mohammedan education is in a very backward condition, that of the various sects of Christians is very prosperous. The energy and patriotism of the Greeks in this direction cannot be over-praised. When a Greek Perote grows rich, whether at home or abroad, his first thought is to help on the educational movement of his fellow-citizens. It would be impossible to find better conducted colleges for young men and women, than the Greek Lycé and the Zapeion—so called after its wealthy and patriotic founder — in Pera. The buildings of the Lycé are magnificent, the education excellent, and the only fault to be found is the lack of a certain virility of tone in the boys' schools, which is, unfortunately, noticeable in almost all foreign establishments of the kind. The Zapeion is admirably managed — the building is a veritable palace—and the good effect of the institution, in the improvement of the moral tone among the rising generation of Greek women, is exceedingly great. That highly-gifted lady, the Princess Mavrocordato—the accomplished wife of the Greek Minister—is amongst the patronesses, and her enlightened influence cannot fail to be invaluable.

At Halki, one of the Princes Islands, there is another admirable school for Greek boys, and the Greek Theological Seminary, on the lovely slopes of Antigoni, is an invaluable institution. Wherever there are Greeks in sufficient numbers, education is sure to be well to the fore. All that would seem to be needed, is a certain strengthening of the moral tone—a more independent spirit among the boys, a more truly artistic feeling amongst girls.

The Armenians are not behind the Greeks. They, too, spend vast sums on education, and are striving earnestly to improve the tone of their youth of both sexes. Still, the moral atmosphere of their schools is not an absolutely healthy one.

The education of the Roman Catholic subjects of the Porte is almost exclusively in the hands of the religious orders. The Lazarists have a very fine college for boys in Galata; the Jesuits another in Pera; and the Franciscans, Capuchins, Christian Brothers, and the Brothers of St. Vincent de Paul, give gratuitous teaching to the children of the poor, regardless of denomination, throughout the Empire, and have certainly maintained their reputation against all odds. The Jesuits have nine colleges in Asia Minor, and the Dominicans, Christian Brothers, and Lazarists, many schools in Armenia. Their system of education is identical with the one they follow in Europe. There are many excellent convent schools for girls, which up till recently were frequented by the Mohammedan daughters of liberal-minded Turks. The Sultan has put a stop to this, not much to the regret

of the teachers, who found the Turkish girls very difficult to manage. Our own High School for girls, under the very capable direction of Miss Green, would be worthy of London, it is so well and so intelligently managed.

Another educational institution at Constantinople, Robert College, deserves special notice, not only on account of the valuable work it has done, and is doing, but because the extreme beauty of its situation, on the hill over the Bosphorus, is a perfect revelation to a traveller, who, like the author of this book, had been sorely disenchanted by his earlier experiences, as far as sky and scenery are concerned, of this world-famed locality.

The college was founded at Rumelli-Hissar, in 1863, by Mr. Charles Robert, of New York. It stands on a most lovely site over the Bosphorus. The view from the terrace of the house inhabited by Dr. Washburn, the President of the college, is marvellously beautiful. The Bosphorus, as seen from this point, appears to take the shape of three beautiful lakes, which, at the early season of the year, are literally wreathed in purple masses of the judas flower, which cover the banks with sheets of brilliant colour. The fine ruins of the castle built by Mohammed II. form a majestic and thoroughly mediæval foreground.

Robert College would seem, so far as is possible on so small a scale, to combine many of the advantages of Eton, with those of a first-class University. The teachers, all of them, whether Europeán or American,

have passed rigorous examinations in the higher branches of education. The scholars are almost all Orientals. At the present moment, Armenians predominate, but some twenty years ago, the Bulgarians were in the majority, and to Robert College Bulgaria certainly owes the remarkable strides that country has made in European civilisation and liberal ideas. The school is undenominational, the pupils, who are all resident, being allowed to attend their several places of worship on Sundays. Some years ago there were several Turks in the college; but the Sultan has lately, and not wisely, prohibited their attendance—in the mistaken fear that they might imbibe revolutionary and anti-Mohammedan ideas. It was most encouraging to see these Eastern lads playing golf, and cricket, and other Anglo-American sports, with quite as much zest and heartiness as English boys. Their air of independence, their gentlemanlike manner, and the pleasant atmosphere of the whole place, led me to the conviction that twenty Robert Colleges, established in various parts of Asia Minor, would do more good to the country, in ten years, than all the Cabinets of Europe together. The spirit of this college is precisely what is needed in the East, not among the Mohammedans only, but also among the Christians. It may, therefore, be concluded, that whereas the education of the Christian population is developing in a satisfactory manner, that of the Mohammedan is stationary or even retrograde, in nine cases out of ten; *ergo*, the Turk stands little or no chance in the struggle for life,

which modern ideas and civilisation is creating daily in the Ottoman Empire.

The fine qualities of the Turkish population have already been referred to. Its sobriety, its civility, its high sense of honour and hospitality, have all been insisted upon; its fanaticism has not been denied, nor its cruelty, when once roused by the conviction that the Christians are conspiring to destroy the Moslim Empire and drive the true believers out. The cruelty of Easterns is traditional. It dates from the time Cain killed his brother. There exists in the Louvre an Assyrian cylinder of the time of Assurbanipal, otherwise Sardanapalus, on which that monarch records, with undisguised satisfaction, that he has made some 600 prisoners, has flayed 200 alive, and embellished the walls of his capital with their hides, that with the heads of another 200 he has erected a pyramid, in which he greatly rejoices, and that the rest have been built up alive in the wall then in process of erection for the better protection of his Palace.* Peoples who, from time immemorial, have been accustomed to behold scenes of this description soon grow callous, and consider the torturing of persons whom they hold to have done them injury, or to have insulted their religion, as the most natural thing on earth. Such is the hardening effect of the constant sight of horrors, that even the gentle Henrietta Maria of England—when she returned to London after the restoration of her son, King Charles II.—paused on London Bridge, and

* Quoted by M. de Cholet in his "Arménie."

smilingly inquired to whom the heads of the rebels which had been there set up (and which, we are assured, were in a dreadful state of decomposition) might belong?

Nothing but education—and that one of high humanitarian character—can wean the Oriental from his habitual cruelty. The present Sultan has, I repeat, done much to encourage education. He is, perhaps, the only sovereign in the world who, at his own expense, gives every educational establishment in his capital or environs, without distinction of religion, an annual picnic of the most elaborate kind. If he hears of any young man or woman of talent, either for drawing or for music, he will frequently bestow encouragement in the shape of handsome gifts and prizes. But all this avails little if the education imparted is merely superficial, and a little education is, we all know, by no means a satisfactory possession.

During the past ten years, the decline of the Ottoman Power has become more and more apparent. The disorder in the administration, the scandalous waste of money in every one of its departments, are indescribable, far exceeding what the ordinary Englishman would believe possible. Adventurers from all parts of the world have made Constantinople, and especially Pera, their resort, and by a persistent system of blackmailing, carry on a terrorising system, which has reached a point very difficult to convey in words.

Then, again, the censorship, as already remarked, is as absolutely ridiculous as it is utterly insincere.

Books and vouchers are stopped at the post-office on the most trivial pretexts—in many cases simply with the object of extorting backsheesh. A number of books, with the help of which I proposed to finally correct the work on the French Revolution alluded to in another chapter, and which was destroyed by fire at Misiri's Hotel, were seized at the Constantinople Custom House, together with a quantity of winter clothing, and other things, with which they had been packed, and were not recovered for more than three months. These books contained no reference either to the Sultan, or to his Government, and, in fact, dealt exclusively with matters bearing on the period of the Great Revolution in France. A gentleman connected with the British Embassy had a number of children's books—one of which contained the story of Bluebeard—sent out from London. This book was confiscated, because Bluebeard was represented as wearing a turban, and because his wife was called Fatima. The Embassy, at another time, received the Sultan's pressing invitation to prevail upon the chaplain of the Anglican church to discontinue the singing of the well-known hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers." His Majesty had been persuaded that the hymn in question was a revolutionary song, and that the excellent ladies and gentlemen who assembled in the English church on Sunday afternoons were bent on "an onward march" to Yildiz! But the climax was surely reached when the American Minister, Mr. Tirrel, purchased a dinner-service at Vienna, and left orders that it should be sent after him. It was

stopped at the Custom House, for three months, because the unwary china merchant had packed it in a case which had originally been used for the conveyance of dynamite—and the obnoxious word had not been fully obliterated. No telephones are allowed in Constantinople, lest they should facilitate conspiracy. The electric light is not permitted in the city, because the necessary dynamos might lead to an explosion; the light is, however, freely used at Yildiz. Fuad Pasha's yacht was confiscated, because there was a miniature cannon on board. Probably the following incident is about as curious an instance as any, of the innate folly of the Turkish censorship. When President Carnot was assassinated, every paper or despatch containing the terrible news was carefully confiscated, and few persons beyond the staffs of the various Embassies knew the truth. That something dreadful had happened was known soon enough, and the most alarming reports were in circulation. Not only was the President assassinated, but Paris was in flames, and half the population killed. To allay the alarm the truth was told at last, but too late. It was, however, presently officially confirmed, but the papers printed in Constantinople were only allowed to state that "President Carnot had been *accidentally killed*." The earthquakes occurring shortly afterwards, the matter was soon banished from most people's minds, doubtless to the extreme satisfaction of His Imperial Majesty, who holds the word "assassination" in the greatest horror!

The importation of the works of the great classical writers—Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Molière, Voltaire, Racine—is prohibited, and yet, strange to say, all of these works are procurable in the Grande Rue de Pera, and very little above the price usually charged in Paris and London. In Stambul itself I purchased, for a few francs, a complete edition of Voltaire's plays, including even *Mahomet*. On the occasion of a visit to Brusa, Murray's guide-book was impounded, and only restored just before I returned, on payment of a sum equalling about four shillings in our money. The portion of the guide-book dealing with the Turkish administration had been excised, and all allusions to Armenia, even to such simple facts as that an Armenian church stands opposite such and such a mosque, utterly obliterated. A railway excursion to Ismidt was advertised. At the hour (six o'clock in the morning) appointed for departure, the travellers were told that the Sultan had forbidden the trip, out of fear that it might lead to an Armenian conspiracy. There was not an Armenian in the party, which exclusively consisted of English and Germans, who had bought their tickets beforehand. All intercourse between Turks and Europeans is prohibited. No Turkish gentleman dares invite a European to dine with him—no Turkish lady dares pay a visit to a European of her own sex.

This condition of things existed long before the Armenian crisis; but it evidently led up to it, and it is leading up to worse things now—to such discontent among His Majesty's subjects that the end cannot be far off.

There can be no doubt that in the past forty years the intensity of religious sentiment in the capital has diminished considerably, among Mohammedans and Christians alike. This is due to the influence of foreign, especially French, literature, of a sceptical character, and to the general tone of religious incredulity at present rife in Europe. A generation or so ago Mohammedans might often be seen performing their devotions in the open streets, or in their shops. Such a sight is now exceedingly rare. The upper classes are not close in their attendance at the mosques, excepting, perhaps, in Ramazān. Their devotions are performed in their private oratories, the existence of which is made an excuse for neglecting public worship. The common people are as devout as ever, and go through the prescribed prayers with time-honoured punctuality; but those who have lived in Constantinople for many years, notice that even the great Fast of Ramazān is not anything like as rigidly kept now, as in what many are pleased to call the "good old times." In some of the mosques, however, an intensity of devotion may be observed, which is hardly conceivable by the average untravelled English reader. In connection with religious practices in Constantinople, it should be observed that there are literally three days of rest in each week observed by nearly the whole population. Friday is the Mohammedan day of rest, during which all public offices are closed. Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, is not so strictly observed, but falling as it does between the Islāmic and the Christian holidays, it may be described as a

dies non as far as business matters go. The Sunday is observed by the entire population, Islāmic and Christian. The public offices and banks are closed, and the whole town is *en fête*. The shops are shuttered, the churches are crowded, the Turks sit outside their cafés, watching the Christians going to Mass, and, in the summer afternoons, crowds may be seen picnicking in the great cemetery along the walls. Many Christian fêtes, besides Christmas and Easter, are generally observed, and Ramazān puts a stop, of course, to all serious business, for considerably over a month.

Turkish intolerance, so called, is a subject which needs a little fair and just attention. In a certain sense the Turk may, indeed, be said to be intolerant. He is so absolutely in love with his own religion, that he looks upon all persons who believe otherwise than himself, as half-witted, and much to be pitied folk. But he has an intense reverence for religious feeling in all its forms, and, in times of peace, the Christians in Constantinople have invariably been treated with the utmost courtesy. The Mohammedan Bazaar actually subscribed to give a donkey and panniers as a present to one of the "Little Sisters of the Poor" who frequents the Bazaar in order to collect scraps for her poor people. This was an absolutely freewill and unprompted offering. No greater tolerance could, I am sure, be found either in England or in America. Greek and Armenian religious processions are frequently to be seen in the streets of Pera and Galata. Convents are built with far less trouble and opposition than in France, and, somewhat to the

inconvenience of travellers and visitors, convent bells ring freely everywhere. Christian schools, and colleges of all denominations, work undisturbedly. One thing only is not tolerated for a moment—any attempt to convert a Mohammedan. On the other hand, it should be remarked that no people on the earth show less inclination to become Christianised. The life and conversation of those professors of Christianity whom the Turks see around them may, or may not, be calculated to entice them to join the Christian Church. But certain it is that, except, perhaps, in Syria, the conversion of any Moslim man, woman, or child, is the rarest of events. I was, indeed, told by the Superioress of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul that sometimes a little Mohammedan child, abandoned by its parents, and attending their schools in Syria, would become a Christian, but such an incident is otherwise almost unknown. The Christian missions in the East are therefore of little value as far as converting the Mohammedan goes.

The absolute dissimilarity of their language from any Western tongue (except the Magyar) forms a serious impediment to intercourse between the Turks, and foreigners of any nationality. This, in diplomatic matters, is obviated by the mediation of a third person, the dragoman, who, if he does not altogether change the meaning of the conversation, is very apt to pervert it amazingly.

The language itself is soft and varied in sound, and especially musical when spoken by a woman. Easily learnt by ear, it is extremely difficult to write.

Now, seeing it is an absolute rule that the Sultan writes and reads nothing, connected with State or religious matters, which is not couched in Turkish, or Arabic, everything must be translated back into the language of the Ambassador, or other person, with whom the Sovereign is in communication, and the confusion resulting from dependence on such translated intercourse may be imagined.

The habit of being served by slaves, which has existed for ages among the Turks, has engendered a spirit of indolence in the native population which can only be slowly eradicated.

The Turk holds himself far superior to the Christian. Yet he always sets the despised Christian in the highest places in his capital. The finances, the very Government, are carried on by Englishmen, Armenians, French, Germans, Poles, Greeks, and so forth. The Finance Department is directed by that exceedingly able Englishman, Sir Edgar Vincent, who, to the qualification—so necessary in the East—of an imposing presence, adds a very remarkable business capacity. The *Dette Publique* is managed by Sir Vincent Caillard, and by a French gentleman, who hold office alternately, a year at a time. The railways are worked by foreign officials and employés. The Government and the domestic Palace are "run" by Armenians and Greeks. The rising generation of sailors is instructed by an Englishman, Woods Pasha; a German Pasha drills the army. English, French, and German cheap goods, printed calicoes, tin ware, indiarubber, etc., etc., fill the Bazaars, which

erstwhile glowed with the most beautiful Oriental fabrics. The Eastern goods still offered for sale have utterly deteriorated; the use of aniline dyes has altered the colouring, and the patterns are generally vulgar and glaring, to the last extent. The yellow double-shoes and slippers, the sale of which once formed one of the staple trades of Constantinople, have entirely disappeared. Their place is supplied by black shoes, mostly manufactured in Berlin, and imported wholesale. In fact, it may fairly be asserted, that, save for a few curious objects still to be picked up, in out-of-the-way parts of the city, almost all the Oriental wares exposed in the various Constantinople Bazaars can be bought cheaper at Liberty's, in London.

The army, which, as already stated, is commanded by a German Pasha and drilled by German officers, is remarkable for the martial appearance, and for the extraordinary bravery, of the men composing it. Military men of all nations acknowledge that the Ottoman makes the finest of soldiers. A visitor to the Selāmlick is immediately struck by the neatness of the Turkish uniforms, and by the beauty of the military chargers. Here we have one of the many illusions of Constantinople. The 1,400 or 1,500 men quartered close to Yildiz, to guard the Sovereign's person, are soldiers in deed and truth, and necessarily keep themselves, and their mounts, and accoutrements, with soldierly smartness and care. But the great bulk of the Turkish army—some 300,000 men—is in a most deplorable condition. Sometimes the men will not receive their pay once

in three months, and the majority of their officers do not get a penny in six. Numbers, in consequence, have to live by their wits, and, through stress of circumstances, become virtual brigands. An English gentleman, owning a farm near Ismidt, has been driven, by the unchecked depredations of starving Turkish soldiers, to abandon any attempt to cultivate his land. Another peculiarity about the Turkish army lies in the fact that, except as an instructor, no Christian is allowed to enter it. The reason for this is obvious. The Turk will not trust the Christian with arms. He makes him pay a small extra tax, and exempts him from military service. Sultan Mahmūd made an attempt to employ Christian soldiers, but it was a complete failure. The Christians and the Mohammedans would not work together, and so the Christians were dismissed. The mainspring of the courage of Turkish soldiers lies in their belief that if they die for Allah, and His Prophet, they will immediately pass into that Paradise of delights which every Moslim dreams of. The Christian's hope, though not less sure, is less absolutely immediate. This may perhaps account for the failure of Sultan Mahmūd's experiment.

The navy is in much the same case as the army. Although the position of Constantinople literally commands the seas, the Turkish fleet is absolutely unsound. A fleet of obsolete ships of war lies in the Golden Horn, whence they have scarcely budged since they were built, save for occasional pleasure trips. The Turkish sailor—quite as brave, doubt-

less, as the Turkish soldier—is utterly untrained in the habits and the knowledge necessary to the successful use of those terrible engines of maritime warfare which have been invented within the last thirty years.

The subject of agriculture is one at which I can only glance in a very cursory manner, as I had little or no opportunity, during my visit to the Sultan's dominions, of observing the conditions of this all-important industry, and cannot claim any special qualifications for judging the subject, had such opportunity offered.

This much, however, may be fairly asserted. Asia, especially Turkish Asia, was once "the World's Garden." The Euphrates valley, the country surrounding Nineveh, formerly waved with rich crops, under the patient hand of the toiling peasant and slave, and the fecundating streams carried in every direction from the river and its tributaries. There is no reason that all these countries, and others in the Turkish Empire, such as the Armenian Plateau, the rich valleys of Anatolia, the plains of Bithynia, etc., should not once more "blossom like the rose." Irrigation, cultivation, are all that are needed to call forth the sleeping treasures of that wealth-yielding soil. European Turkey is as naturally and extremely fertile, and has been less neglected, though much room for improvement does, it must be admitted, exist. Yet even under the present circumstances, opium, silk, and tobacco, are largely and successfully grown, and the natural richness of the earth, in the neigh-

bourhood, is proved by the fact, that, two years ago, ears of corn, gathered at random in a wheat-field near San Stefano, were found to contain as many as 200 grains.

The present Sultan has founded an Agricultural Bank, and his admirers boast loudly of the benefits of this institution, and of those conferred by the model farms, the schools of agriculture, and of forestry, which he has bestowed upon his Empire. But there is reason to fear that these all suffer—first from the incurable defects inherent to the ignorant and corrupt conditions of Turkish administration, and also from the equally inherent dislike of the uneducated peasant to any new departure, to any new form or system of working the land, nay, even to any unfamiliar tool or appliance. He still clings to the uncouth instruments of his forefathers, and until his mind is enlightened, and the bonds of Moslim prejudice are cast off, he will use no other. The condition of the roads* throughout the Empire—mere tracks, often utterly impassable (except in the case of highways close to great towns)—is a complete bar to any successful transport of, and commerce in, agricultural produce. To these disadvantages must be added the general prevalence of a well-organised system of brigandage.

The Ottoman Empire can easily vie with Russia and America in the production of cereals. At present the amount of grain raised is insufficient for home consumption, so that the Turks have actually to import wheat from Hungary and Servia, which they could and ought to grow themselves.

* In Khurdistan and Mesopotamia there are none at all.

The same difficulty of transport—coupled with the original one of obtaining concessions, and of working them profitably, when once granted—hampers all mining enterprise in European and Asiatic Turkey—a fact the more to be regretted, when the extraordinary mineral wealth of the Sultan's dominions is considered. The coal mines of Heraclé, the silver, iron, copper, mercury, and lead mines of Asia Minor and Asia, might make their Imperial possessor the richest Sovereign in the world. And thousands of his subjects, employed in working them, might earn their modest share of the splendid harvest. The Turkish and other native manufactures, as remarked elsewhere, are in a deplorably backward condition, excepting the silk factories of Brusa, which are in the hands of foreigners, mostly Frenchmen and Belgians. Even the carpet-making is declining in importance, and the fez, which every Ottoman subject must wear, is made by the million, not in Turkey at all, but in Vienna and Orleans. The tobacco trade has undoubtedly increased in importance, thanks to the *Régie*, which is directed by Englishmen and Frenchmen, and owes much of its present importance to the ability of Sir Vincent Caillard.

But prejudice and backsheesh form the sorry palladium of the Turkish official, and unless the whole order changes, his country, with all its glorious memories, and all its magnificent natural gifts and possibilities, must flounder on, in hopeless, helpless struggle, till the end comes—till Turkey is utterly engulfed, a mere memory of dismemberment. One

chance alone remains for this unhappy Empire, now so fallen from its ancient glory. Let there be an amicable Protectorate of Turkey by the Great Powers. No occupation—the army is good enough if it is properly paid and led. But let qualified Europeans be placed in all positions of trust. Let His Majesty submit himself to the advice of the Protecting Powers. Let the riff-raff of adventurers who now infest the Government, and all Turkish officialdom, be wiped off the face of the earth. Let honest men, trained in the best European schools, teach honest Turks their work. And time and example will breed confidence, and may do much, or all.

This Protectorate of the Great Powers may be an impossible dream. I do not profess a deep acquaintance with diplomatic chances, nor, indeed, any huge knowledge of politics—beyond the knowledge that must, or should, come to every thinking man, who looks out upon the world, and seeks to read the confused and often jarring tale unrolled before him.

But this may be said with certainty. A Protectorate of some kind, or dismemberment, and practical elimination, must, before many years have gone by, be the inevitable fate of the once proud and powerful Ottoman Empire.

CHAPTER VII.

ROUND AND ABOUT STAMBUL.

EVEN as the Neapolitans proudly rejoice in the possession of Capri and Ischia, so does the dweller in Constantinople glory in the tiny archipelago of the Princes Islands, whose varied outline breaks the horizon of the Sea of Marmara, and is the chief charm of the Gulf of Ismid. To reach these enchanting islands, you must take, not a graceful caïque, alas! but a puffing steamer, at the Valideh-Sultan Bridge, and hie you to Scutari, whence, after a brief stoppage at Kadi Keui, you will be borne direct to Prinkipo, the chief of the islands, and the gem of the whole group.

Scutari is much more Oriental than Stambul in general. It is by far the most orthodox quarter of the city, except, perhaps, the little village of Eyub. Your true believer looks rather askance at the Stambulite. He holds him somewhat of a renegade, contaminated, both in custom and in costume, by too close contact with the hated Giaour. You will see more turbans in Scutari in a single day than will strike your eye in the course of a week's wandering

in the neighbourhood of the Sublime Porte. In the narrow thoroughfares of this essentially Eastern town, you may, even now, be jostled aside by long strings of camels, whose towering merchandise-laden humps almost reach the roofs of the one-storeyed houses.

The supreme wish of an orthodox Mussulman, doomed to live on European soil, is to rest his weary bones for ever, in the earth of Asia, thrice sanctified by its sacred cities, Mecca, Medinah, and Zion. Therefore, ages before the downfall of Byzantium, such Mohammedans as diplomacy and business compelled to live within its infidel walls, had prepared for themselves, on the coast of Anatolia, just outside the ancient city of Chrysopolis, a mighty Field of Death. There is nothing, I believe, in any other part of the world, to compare with this funereal forest, where millions of the sons of Islām sleep their last sleep under the shadow of mammoth cypress-trees. In the midst of this, the greatest of all Turkish cemeteries, under a dome supported by six marble columns, rests the favourite charger of Mahmūd II. The giant cypresses rise heavenward, in such close company, as completely to intercept the strongest sunlight, and even in the sultriest weather there reigns a pleasant shade. Here you may restfully meditate, stretched on the soft moss that covers the tombs, in the hot midday silence, broken only by the coo of thousands of doves, roosting in the red-barked branches, amid the deep darkness of the fragrant leaves above your head. Some of these pretty creatures are so tame that they will flutter close to you, almost

nestling at your feet. On a Friday, especially in spring and summer, this cemetery is a popular resort of the Turkish population, both of Scutari and of Stambul. The men sit apart, and smoke, and sip their coffee, whilst, at a discreet distance, their women and children gossip and play. Even so lately as thirty years ago, the Friday gathering in the cemetery of Scutari was very brilliant—so much so, indeed, that Théophile Gautier preferred it to the more famous one at the Sweet Waters of Europe. It is now shorn of most of its picturesqueness, and the people who foregather there are mostly poor folk, whose voices seldom rise above the cooing of the doves—for there is nothing so silent and abstracted as a Turkish crowd. Observant, indeed, it seems, and may well be, but it rarely ventures on any comment.

The mosques of Scutari deserve greater attention than they generally receive. They are exceedingly numerous, and ten, at least, of their number are remarkably beautiful. In a dreamy old-world quarter, where the peering tourist Giaour scarcely dares to adventure himself, stands an ancient Djami known as the Eski Valideh, or the Old Mosque of the Valideh. It was built in 1583 by that very unprincipled lady, the Venetian Sultana Safiā, "the Baffa." In its vast harem there is a most beautiful fountain, a marvel of originality, a gem of quaintness, almost indescribable —the case, indeed, with most Turkish fountains, which more closely resemble a huge marble cage, richly arabesqued, than what we usually associate with the word fountain.

The Yeni Valideh, or New Mosque, owes its origin to Rebieh Goulous (Rose-Water of Spring), a lady who, from being the daughter of a Greek village priest, rose to be the favourite wife of Mohammed IV. When he died, she was kept a close prisoner in the Old Seraglio for eight years. A sudden turn of Fortune's wheel brought her two sons, Mustaphā and Achmet III., successively, to the throne of the Khaliphs. On becoming Valideh, the fair Rose-Water of Spring—who by this time must have lost much of her original freshness—ruled, through her children, with a rod of iron. But far more beautiful than this mosque is the Tchinili Djami, or Tile Mosque, built by Machpeïka-Sultan. This mosque is exquisite, both within and without, by reason of the varied designs of its priceless ceramic decorations. Every inch of space is covered with Persian tiles, of the most lovely colouring, in which every shade of blue, from one which is almost black to the palest turquoise, is blended with matchless art, on the purest white ground. Where the Athenians, in very ancient times, had a harbour, capable of sheltering a fleet of thirty vessels, which has long since been filled up, stands one of the largest mosques in Turkey, the Ibrik Djami, so called because it is held to resemble an inverted water-jar. This edifice is a monument of the paternal affection of Suleymān I. for his daughter Mihrimāh, in whose honour it was erected in 1547.

Scutari is the stronghold, in western Turkey, of the Dervish fraternity. They have here some eighty *tekkiehs*, of which by far the most interesting are those least frequented by strangers. Since it has become

the fashion to conduct Cook's tourists to Scutari, on Friday afternoons, to listen to the howling of the Rufâ'ees, these worthies have become somewhat mechanical in the performance of their religious exercises, and have long since abolished—unless, indeed, they practise them in secret—those dreadful instruments of torture which so disgusted Gautier. There is one curious *tekkieh*, that of the Khalvettees, which is rarely seen by the Giaour. The Dervishes attached to it, like the Catholic Carthusians, rise in the dead of night, to praise the Lord, and to chant the midnight Temjid—a petition for the benefit of those good people who cannot sleep o' nights—a kindly occupation, surely!

What a contrast to the great unkept cemetery of the Mohammedans, where Nature is left to work her own sweet will, is that beautiful garden of the Dead, where eight thousand nameless Englishmen sleep, watched by Marochetti's colossal angel. The Crimean monument may not be a masterpiece, but it produces a curious effect in this un-Christian land, where it commemorates a nobly fought, if useless, war. It is overlooked by a hideous yellow building, associated, however, with one of the noblest names in the history of English womanhood, that of Florence Nightingale. That unsightly edifice was the hospital in which this gracious woman, and the bevy of kindly souls attracted by her example, served suffering humanity, and soothed the last hours of so many poor lads, who had left England in the hey-day of life, only to be cut down in its early noon, by the ruthless scythe of war.

Kadi Keui, the ancient Chalchedon, is in reality a mere suburb of Scutari. It is a spot, however, so famous in history that a fair-sized volume would hardly suffice to record all the stirring events which those few acres have seen—since Chalchas, Apollo's high-priest, founded his oracle, which in the course of time rivalled that of Delphi, and almost dimmed the fame of Dodona, down to 451 A.D., when that momentous General Council of the Christian Church assembled in the great fane of St. Euphemia to condemn the heresy of Eutyches, and give the Nicene Creed the stamp of its sacred authority. Of its ancient monuments, Kadi Keui possesses no trace, that I was able to discover, but if proper excavations were undertaken, the groundworks of many a once famous temple, or church, might well be revealed. Mr. W. Hanson, a resident, showed me a number of lamps, fragments of little statues, and other ancient odds and ends, which he had picked up in the neighbourhood. I remember spending at least one intensely interesting afternoon, in digging up, on the English tennis-ground, and with little or no trouble, a round dozen of little funeral lamps. There are literally thousands of them in the soil! So great, indeed, is the quantity, that antiquaries think the ground was once occupied by some immense pottery, where such lamps were probably manufactured on a prodigious scale.

Kadi Keui is the principal abode of the English colony of Constantinople. Pleasant villas have been built, and lovely gardens cultivated, but villas and gardens are all too reminiscent of the London suburbs

to suit my fancy. The sight of them entirely obliterates all thought of Chalchedon and Stambul from the mind, and too vividly recalls Norwood and Kew, not to mention Streatham and Clapham. The comfort of their handsome parlours, filled with things rich and rare, Oriental and Occidental, arranged with the orderly care of cultured Englishwomen, is an utter, if not always a delightful contrast, to the mysterious gloom, and the air of neglect and discomfort peculiar to the dwellings of even the richest Pashas.

But if Turk and Christian alike have somewhat disfigured Kadi Keui by the commonplaceness, in externals at all events, of their more modern dwellings, the unchanged beauty of the scenery becomes more and more evident to the traveller who takes boat, and leaves the close proximity of the shore. Cape Neptune juts out sharply into the blue sea. Above it, very distinctly visible on a fine day, rise the snow-covered peaks of Olympus. Another promontory, with a lighthouse upon it, shelters the little village of Moda, nestled at the bottom of a gentle bay, which witnessed one of the most terrible tragedies in the whole of Byzantine history. Hither Maurice Tiberius, one of the worthiest of Greek Emperors, overthrown by a sudden revolution skilfully organised by Phocas —a wretch lifted out of the gutter by the caprice of fate—took refuge with his Empress, and his four sons. An awful storm was raging at the time, and the vessel, with the Imperial fugitives on board, was wrecked. The soldiers of Phocas, in hot pursuit, seized the unfortunate Emperor, his wife, and little

ones, and in the presence of an immense but awe-struck crowd, beheaded the mother and her children, before the eyes of the agonised husband and father. Finally the executioner struck off his head, and as the historian Tophanes assures us, "his gray locks and white beard mingled with the soft, golden tresses of the mother and her children." The six bodies were thrown into the sea, but the waves, as if indignant at so horrible an outrage, cast them back upon the sands; on seeing which the terrified people fled, convinced that the wrath of the Panagia would soon overtake them. Moda is associated, too, with the names of Justinian and Theodora, who there built themselves a pleasant palace, with baths and marble porticoes, and great cool halls lined with jasper and agate, and lofty windows, looking out upon gardens terraced down to the very margin of the sea.

Less than an hour's sail from Moda lands us at Prinkipo, the largest of the seven islands which form this group, world-famous though lilliputian. Prinkipo is its queen, the fairest and the most historic. Proudly it rises out of the sea, and seems, in its luxuriant robe of sub-tropical vegetation, to look with a sort of disdain on its less fertile sister rivals, Proti, Antigoni, Pitys, Anderovithos, and Niandro. The Princes Islands, at this present time, are essentially pleasure resorts, and Prinkipo, to the Perotes and Greeks in general, is very much what Bournemouth is to Londoners, and Trouville to Parisians. The old Byzantines do not seem to have had any special adoration for the beauties of nature, nor do they

appear to have built either palaces, or Imperial villas, on the islands. But they dotted their hills, and lined their shores, with monasteries and nunneries, and, true to their curious instinct for wedding religion to every act of their political and social life, even to the extent of forcing it to bless their most cruel deeds, they converted these monasteries and nunneries into State prisons—abodes of horror, within whose iron walls they confined such of their Emperors and Empresses, patriarchs, generals, and statesmen, as became the victims of their countless revolutions, and of their passionate and easily-roused love of persecution. The list of victims who have met with a horrible death in these gruesome dungeons, or languished away their lives in convent cells, would fill a volume. Irene the Great, she who so nearly became the partner of Charlemagne, was imprisoned here for a time, ere she was sent to die of despair at Lesbos. Here, too, Zoë, perhaps the strangest character in all history, spent a part of her singular life, before she was summoned, when nearly fifty, to ascend the throne, and astonish the world by her sagacity as a Sovereign, and by those abnormal and suddenly developed passions which would seem to have eclipsed those of Messalina, and Catherine of Russia.

I would I had space to relate a tithe of the legends and true histories which impart an almost breathless interest to this little archipelago; but space is limited, and I must e'en content myself with pausing for a moment before these two famous (or infamous?) names—Irene and Zoë.

It was on one of the loveliest slopes of Prinkipo that the unnatural Irene built the monastery of the Holy Virgin, which in due time became a kind of State prison sacred to the women of the Imperial house, and there its foundress passed five years in rigorous seclusion. She had reigned gloriously, according to this world's wisdom, but had stained her name for ever by a most hideous crime, which assuredly brought down the vengeance of Heaven upon her head—she put out the eyes of her own son that she might rule in his stead. Divine wrath soon overtook her. Hurled from her throne by a sudden revolution, she was exiled, first to her nunnery at Prinkipo, and then to Lesbos, where the once all-powerful Basilessa was reduced to earn her living by spinning wool, and where she actually died of want and grief.

Notwithstanding her monstrous cruelty to her son, Irene came, in time, to be venerated as a saint of the Orthodox Church, and certain learned historians have sought, in our own time, to clear her memory from the awful charges so freely brought against her in her lifetime. She must, undoubtedly, have possessed an extraordinary diplomatic talent, for her five short years of sovereignty have left a distinct mark on Byzantine history. Her body was brought back to Prinkipo, and buried in the nunnery she had built. Here it rested, until after the siege of the Crusaders, when it was carried to the Pantocrator, in Constantinople. I have elsewhere described the use to which her magnificent sarcophagus has

been put by the Turks, and the degraded position it now occupies.

Sometimes, so the story goes, the ghostly form of the guilty Empress is seen flitting in the moonlight through the pines, and her voice is heard lamenting, as she joins the long train of unfortunate Princesses to whom Prinkipo was a living sepulchre, and who, on certain nights of the year, are said to join hands in an unearthly dance, suspended, like the Walis, in mid-air above the ruins of the convent prisons, in whose cells they wept away their lives—in penance, some of them, others in the impotent rage of hopeless despair.

Two hundred years later, in the eleventh century, Zoë, the Messalina of the Middle Ages, was sent to do penance at Prinkipo. She was the daughter of the Emperor Constantine XI., and grand-daughter of the murderess Empress, the impure and blood-thirsty Theophana, who had instigated one of her lovers, Zimiscos, to assassinate her second husband, Nicephorus Phocus. From this infamous woman, it may be, Zoë inherited her insatiable love of pleasure and her extraordinarily vicious tastes. Until the age of forty-eight she, with her elder sister Theodora, lived a life of enforced retirement in the Gynecea. The two possible heiresses to the throne had thus become "old maids." No breath of scandal had ever been breathed against the reputation of Zoë, and, had she been left in her seclusion, the world would never, perhaps, have been astounded by the wild debauches of her after life. The sudden death

of their father converted the two recluses into joint Empresses. A few days before he died, Constantine, foreseeing that—Theodora being of a retiring disposition—Zoë would, in all probability, ascend the throne in her sister's stead, married her to the patrician Romanos Argrus, surnamed "of Jerusalem." The new Empress behaved, for a time, with a reticence which won her the applause of Court and people. Her first overt exploit was to rid herself of her sister Theodora. Fearing she might alter her mind and claim her share of power, she induced her to shave her head and enter the Nunnery of the Petrion, the walls of which were laved by the Golden Horn. There was very probably another reason for this step —the watchful eye of Theodora had already, perhaps, noticed Zoë's strange conduct, and dark hints as to her life had reached her ears. No sooner, at all events, was Theodora safe within convent walls, than Zoë annexed a lover—a man of the very lowest birth, exceedingly handsome, but an epileptic. He played his cards well, and the Emperor Romanus, although well aware of his wife's infidelity, took care to keep the matter secret. Zoë's lover, Michael by name, desiring to wear the purple himself, entered into a conspiracy against the unfortunate Emperor, and on Holy Thursday, 1004, as the poor man was taking his bath, the eunuchs who were attending him ducked his head into the hot water and nearly suffocated him. He was lifted out of the bath and carried to his bed, where he died a few days afterwards, attended by his wife, who played her part of *veuve éplorée* to perfection.

Zoë was fifty-three years of age, on the day she draped the Imperial mantle round the broad shoulders of her lover, who assumed the title of Emperor Michael IV. She married him within twenty-four hours of becoming a widow. Conscience-stricken, and constantly haunted by visions of the unfortunate Romanus, whose death he had caused, Michael abandoned himself to the most fantastic and exaggerated practices of religion, and soon became unendurable, as a husband, to his pleasure-loving wife. He tore his garments, he dined with beggars, and he even filled his hair and garments with objectionable insects. Whilst he was flagellating himself before the various shrines, Zoë formed the acquaintance of a certain eunuch named John, who had been a prime mover in the conspiracy against the Emperor Romanus. John seems to have obtained tremendous influence over the old Empress, and he ruled in her name, keeping her, as far as possible, a close prisoner in her Palace. Seven years later, Michael fell hopelessly ill. Then John, the eunuch, induced the dying Emperor to command Zoë to follow the custom of a childless Byzantine ruler, and adopt a son. The son thus adopted was to be the wily eunuch's own nephew. The story of the scene of this adoption is one of the most characteristic in Byzantine history. The aged Empress went in great state to the Church of the Blachernœ, and, taking up her station by the altar of the Panagia, awaited the arrival of her dying husband, who was carried into the church on a litter, and placed immediately in front of the Iconaste, which blazed with hundreds of lamps, lighted

for the occasion. The young man who was to become heir to the throne, a tall and handsome fellow, was conducted into the church by the priests, who wore their most magnificent robes, whilst the youth, who was of the commonest origin, was simply arrayed in a plain white shirt. During the strange ceremonies which ensued, the gray-haired Empress had to seat him on her knees, just as if he had been an infant, and kiss his forehead, as she would have kissed a little child. Then she took a solemn oath to consider him as born of her own body. Anon the dying Emperor was lifted from his couch, and, in a trembling voice, proclaimed the eunuch's base-born nephew, Michael, Emperor in his own stead, the people without the shrine shouting, "Long live the Emperor!" while, in all directions, the trumpets proclaimed the new ruler to the citizens. Five days later Michael expired in the Monastery of the Saints Cosmos and Damian. Although, on hearing that he was at his last gasp, the Empress had hurried to the door of the convent, and had implored admission, her husband sternly refused to see her again.

The first act of the new Emperor was to banish his uncle, the eunuch John, and to rid himself, as soon as possible, of those who had assisted in placing him on the throne. He exiled Zoë to Prinkipo, and obliged her to cut off her gray locks, and to assume the veil. It is even reported that he caused her hair to be brought to him, so as to assure himself of her powerlessness. The miserable eunuch John, his eyes ruthlessly put out, died in exile, and in terrible agony. Zoë, however, had contrived to win

the affections of her people during her reign, and the lower orders in Constantinople rose in her favour, and gathering under the windows of her terrified adopted son, proclaimed his deposition and the succession of the two old sisters, Zoë and Theodora—whom they called their "mothers"—to the Imperial throne. A deputation from the patricians and the Senate proceeded to Prinkipo, and presenting itself before the two Imperial nuns, implored them to leave the convent at once, and hurry to the capital for their joint coronation. Meanwhile Michael, beside himself with terror, hid in the Monastery of the Studion, and even went so far as to have his head shaved, and to assume a friar's frock, hoping thereby to escape the vengeance of the Empresses. Zoë, to her credit, did all she could to save him. She even went out on the terrace of the Palace, and harangued the populace in his favour; but her sister, Theodora, soured by her enforced seclusion among a rigid order of nuns, commanded that Michael should have his eyes burnt out. The crowd rushed to the Studion, tore him from his cell, and dragged him through the streets to one of the principal squares. Here the unhappy wretch was deprived of his sight, and then restored to his monastery, where he died some years afterwards.

Nothing more extraordinary can be imagined than the contrast between the lives of the two Imperial sisters. Zoë, being now absolutely independent, gave herself up to every sort of orgy, changed lovers every week, dressed like a young girl, and is actually

said, like our own Queen Bess, to have danced as nimbly as the youngest of her ladies. Theodora, stern and chaste, turned her attention to the national affairs, and won herself fame in the annals of Byzantium. The frolicsome Zoë soon wearied of widowhood, and, desiring another husband, selected, from amongst her former lovers, a certain Constantine, commonly called the Bread-cutter, that being his occupation at the Court. His wife, however, resolved not to yield him, even to an Empress, and so poisoned him, much to the anger and grief of the amorous Zoë, who, however, is said not to have avenged herself upon the murderess. Then Zoë cast about again, and her eyes fell upon the handsome Constantine Monomachus. The Greek Church considers a third marriage incestuous, and there was much difficulty in inducing the Patriarch Alexius to place the crown on the head of this new husband, who, aided by his would-be wife, had already banished the venerable Theodora back to Prinkipo. Monomachus had a mistress, Sclerena, who was as beautiful as day, and from whom he determined not to be parted. The Byzantines, therefore, had the pleasure of beholding their Emperor, on State occasions, seated between his two partners —the gray-haired Zoë and the lovely Sclerena. The two ladies, however, lived on the best of terms until 1049, when the mistress died. Two years later, Zoë departed, in her seventy-first year, a life which she can scarcely be said to have adorned. To the very last she enjoyed existence, according to her

own conception of delight, and she is said to have expired within a few hours of one of her most singular orgies. Her sister Theodora succeeded her, and left, as I have already intimated, an honourable record in the annals of her country.

Two centuries later Anna Comnena, the famous historian, lived at Prinkipo, and in the same nunnery as the sister Empresses. It may well have been here, prompted, possibly, by the perusal of some learned book, that she entered on her literary career, and so eventually became the historian who has had the honour, in this present century, of inspiring so great a writer as Sir Walter Scott—the subject of one of whose novels, "Count Robert of Paris," was drawn from her chronicles.

The existence of the Princes Islands as a pleasure resort dates from comparatively recent times. During the Crimean War their climate rendered them a very favourite retreat for our convalescent officers. During the late Russo-Turkish War, the better classes of the Christian population of Constantinople sought them as places of refuge, under the protection of the British fleet, against a possible Mohammedan rising in the capital. Notwithstanding that the political horizon was gloomy, and the fate of Constantinople in the balance, the fair Greeks, Armenians, and Levantines rendered themselves most agreeable to our gallant naval officers, and Prinkipo and Halki were *en fête* from morning till night, and, indeed, from night till morning.

From that time to this the fashionable world of

these regions has constantly flocked, during the summer months, to breathe the delicious air of the pine-woods and to enjoy the lovely views of these delightful islands. Very few Turks, however, come here, and those who do are not much in favour with the Sultan, being considered altogether unorthodox. Their wives, taking advantage of the fact that, somehow or other, His Majesty's spies rarely trouble the Princes Islands with their presence, go about with heir *yashmacs* simply tied round their heads, and their faces fully exposed, thus turning the jealous screen into a becoming head-dress, lending an additional beauty to the charming faces of its wearers.

However, during the few days I spent at Prinkipo, in the summer of '94, a curious incident took place. Some Turkish ladies, in imitation of their English sisters, determined to enjoy a moonlight row from Prinkipo to the neighbouring isle of Proti—the deserted island on which Sir Henry Bulwer, when Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, conceived the fantastic idea of building a villa, which he never inhabited, and which is now a ruin. The party of ladies was a fairly large one, and when they were in their caïques they began to sing an old Turkish song in so delightful a manner as to obtain applause from a number of European gentlemen who were watching proceedings from the pier. On its return the party was met by the Chief Inspector of Police, with a message from the Governor, who ordered the ladies forthwith to appear before him, with their veils well adjusted, exhibiting only the

eyes, according to regulation. Fortunately, among them was a lady, closely connected with the Imperial family, who boldly informed the worthy Governor that if he interfered, she would take good care to make things uncomfortable for him at the Palace. His Excellency thought it wiser to beat a retreat, and with a caution that such an expedition should not take place again, and that the ladies should not appear in the highways of Prinkipo, after dusk, he permitted them to return to their homes.

On Sundays both Prinkipo and Antigoni are crowded with clerks and their wives, small shopkeepers and their families, from Constantinople, who, if they do vulgarise the romantic isles more than a little, make them very gay—for they scamper all over the hills on donkeys, and picnic round the old Monasteries of St. George and St. Mary, two of the few left intact by the hand of Time and by the Turks. At Prinkipo is a famous shrine of St. George, which, in the last week of April, and the first in May, attracts an enormous confluence of pilgrims, many of them in their ancient costumes, who, after venerating the relic of the good St. George of Cappadocia, the patron saint of the Byzantines, the Genoese, and the English, dance national dances, and enjoy the sweet spring evening until the steamer bell remorselessly recalls them.

THE BOSPHORUS.

I had heard so much of the beauties of the Bosphorus, that I confess it disappointed me. The hills

are low-lying and of no particular distinction of outline. The colouring for the most part is gray, and the far-famed Imperial Palaces, which are really the only monuments of any importance on either shore, always reminded me of the mansions of the retired stock-brokers of New York, for even the Dolma Baghtcheh lacks grandeur, and, were it not built of white marble, would be voted somewhat stagey in appearance. The villages are still picturesque enough, but are being rapidly spoilt by the introduction of the very worst style of London and Parisian suburban architecture; and the few good old Turkish houses which remain have a tumble-down and desolated appearance, which, though quaint enough, is somewhat depressing.

Therapia, where the Bosphorus widens out to the Black Sea, commands a majestic, almost an awe-inspiring view; but surely the man who designed the British Embassy, which occupies a most prominent position—on the very spot where, possibly, the furious Medea landed, in hot pursuit of the recalcitrant Jason—deserves a hearty curse, for no spot, rich in itself in natural beauty and classical interest, was ever saddled with so absolutely commonplace and trivial a disfigurement. Nor is the German Embassy much better, nor the Therapia Palace Hotel, with its false air of the Savoy, nor the ugly modern Catholic Church. Only one building, the French Embassy, is really appropriate to its surroundings. The Asiatic shore has been less spoilt by the Europeans. Kandali is still an enchanting village, with its street of wooden

houses, its mosques and minarets, its church and campanile, and its fine old wooden palaces overlooking the delicious Sweet Waters of Asia, where, on Friday afternoons, the Turkish women flit about in their caïques, wearing, most of them, it must be confessed, European costumes, and shading their slightly veiled faces with the latest Parisian lace and gauze, but guarded by eunuchs, who squat in the stern of boats, unrivalled, save by the Venetian Gondola, for grace and romantic charm.

Rumelli-Hissar, with the fine old ruins of Mohammed's castle, is remarkably picturesque, and the view from the heights above, on a fine spring morning, when the judas-trees are coming out in bloom, is one which can never be forgotten.

Buyukderé, beyond Therapia, has a distinctly Italian aspect. It is especially gay and bright on a Sunday afternoon, as it is the starting-point for the Forest of Belgrade. Passing the gigantic plane-tree, known as the Crusaders', under which Godfrey de Bouillon is said to have assembled some hundreds of his men in council, you ride through charming country to Belgrade—a fine pasture-land, the beauty of the trees, and a certain grace of outline, recalling the prettiest parts of the Midland counties of England. Belgrade itself, which Lady Mary Wortley Montagu describes so pleasantly in her letters, and which, in her day, was full of colour and beauty, is at present a very tumble-down village indeed, with scarcely a decent house in the place. It boasts a little café hung with chromo-lithographs,

and an interesting old church, before which, on the pleasant Sunday I spent there, a couple of dozen Greek peasants, dressed in cast-off frock-coats and suits, were dancing the Rumana. I found no trace of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's house. Either I was not properly directed, or else it has long since fallen to ruin. The Forest of Belgrade is magnificent. The trees are superb, and even now it extends over a vast area. On a Sunday the Armenians haunt it, and I shall never forget a group I beheld, cooking a sheep whole, gipsy-fashion, over a camp fire. The men were dressed in shabby frock-coats, and the women, instead of their own quaint head-gear, wore those very remarkable and much-befeathered hats so dear to the coster girls of London. It has come to this!

CHAPTER VIII.

HIANGEN VAR.

ONE evening, about a week after my arrival in Constantinople, as I sat reading the papers in the sitting-room of the Hôtel Bristol, I heard a strange, weird cry—"Hiangen var! hiangen var!" A few moments afterwards a hurrying procession dashed past the windows. Some forty men, most of them young, with bare feet, arms, and chests, tore at full speed, carrying between them a sort of brazen instrument, much more like an Egyptian idol than a fire-engine. Yet a fire-engine it was—for "hiangen var" is "fire" in Turkish parlance: "Stambul hiangen var," "fire in Stambul!" Nobody appeared particularly disturbed by this warning cry, nor by the wild-looking crew that scurried by, bearing that quaint, but absolutely useless, extinctor in their midst.

Constantinople, since its earliest foundation, has been devoured by the fire fiend a hundred times, at least. Built, even in Byzantine times, almost entirely of wood, except in the case of the palaces and public monuments, it has always resembled, in that respect, an American backwoods settlement, and is no whit less

inflammable. Sometimes, as you go home from theatre or party, you will see an angry glow in the clouds, hanging over the city, and the distant cry of "Stambul hiangen var!" will strike upon your ear. The passers-by look up, and say, "Oh, yes, it's near such and such a mosque;" but they do not care sufficiently about the matter, to follow the running procession of firemen, who, by the way, have a rival in the shape of a more modern brigade, organised on the French system, and captained by a very venturesome Hungarian. The next morning you are told that a hundred houses have been burnt down, and some two or three thousand people rendered homeless.

In former days the Sultan was obliged to attend all fires in person. It mattered not whether he was in bed or not, up His Majesty had to get, and out he had to sally. Suddenly an odalisque, clad in red from head to foot, stood beside the Imperial couch. This strange apparition meant "fire!" and wet or fine, sick or well, the Pādishāh was forced to fly to the rescue. Things are changed now, and Abd-ul-Hamid would not stir out of his Palace, if Stambul were in a blaze from Seraglio Point to the Adrianople Gate.

Little did I dream, when first I heard the cry of "hiangen var," that I was soon to have a never-to-be-forgotten experience of what a fire in Constantinople meant!

When I left London, somewhat suddenly, to go to Constantinople, in December, 1893, I had just completed a work in two volumes, many chapters of which had appeared in the *Saturday Review*, under the title

of "Side Lights on the French Revolution." I had contracted to deliver the book into the publisher's hands, before a certain day in the end of February. It had cost me four years' hard work, and I had spent a great deal of money in collecting hitherto unpublished material for it. All that remained to be done, was a careful revision, and rectification of dates and nomenclature. I carried the two complete MSS. and my notes with me, and sent my library of reference, including some seventy very rare books on the French Revolution, by sea.* I have elsewhere related how these books were seized, and not restored to me till late in March, 1894, thus greatly retarding the completion of my work. Early in that month I left the Hôtel Bristol for the Hôtel d'Angleterre (Misiri's Hotel). There I occupied rooms, which at one time were honoured by the presence of Théophile Gautier, and later by George Augustus Sala, and carried my task so near its close that the MSS. were actually tied up and addressed for despatch to England, by the kind hands of a friendly Queen's messenger who was to start on Monday, 19th April. All Sunday, April 18th, it poured with rain. When I returned, late, from a dinner-party, I found, to my great annoyance, that I could not occupy my room —the window had been broken, they told me, and the rain was beating in. Another room below my own had been prepared for me, and in it I went to bed, without removing a single thing from the apartment above.

* Over a hundred valuable works on Constantinople and Turkey, purchased at the sale of a private library, soon after my arrival in the city, were also burnt.

Towards three in the morning I was awakened by the apparition of an elderly lady, the late Mrs. Tholozan, wife of the doctor to the Shah of Persia, who burst into my room crying, "For the love of God, get up; the house is burning!" I had barely time to put on my slippers, and struggle into a fur-lined coat, before tongues of fire burst through the ceiling, and in a few moments the whole place was in a blaze. My first impulse was to rush to my own rooms, but the flames drove me back, and I found there was but one chance for life—to get out of the blazing house as fast as possible. There were very few people in the hotel, and the porter hit on the excellent idea of calling us by name, so as to make sure all were safe.

My feelings, at this critical moment, were of a nature beyond all power of description. It blew bitterly cold, and the rain fell in torrents, yet I felt neither rain nor wind; all I could think of was my book—my four years' hard work lost—utterly lost. For some time I was quite unconscious of what I was doing. I wandered aimlessly about, full of a dull sense of misery, and quite oblivious of the fact that I was barefooted and in my night-shirt. Nobody noticed my strange garb, nor me—all were too busy with their own affairs—and I wandered down to Tophané without well knowing whither I was going. My sole thought was still my book—my book! I had built such hopes on its success—it had swallowed so many months of precious time, never to be replaced. By degrees I began to realise that with my poor book, all my clothes, a considerable sum of money, and some very valuable jewellery, had

disappeared for ever. I am not ashamed to own it, I cried like a child.

Towards daybreak I found my way back to the Petits Champs, and stood with my two hands resting on the rails of the garden looking across towards Stambul, over whose graceful profile of minaret and dome a beautiful rosy dawn was stealing. The rain had ceased, the coming day promised to be brilliantly fine.

"In the name of God," said a voice beside me, "what are you doing here? You are drenched to the skin."

It was Gigi, a Levantine gentleman, well known in Constantinople, to whom I owed my introduction to "a Nineteenth Century Grand Vizir," described in a later chapter of this work. I had good cause, later, not to love him, but I can never forget his kindness that morning—how he got me back to the hotel, and saw me safe to bed, and tried to console me for my misfortune. But that was beyond his power. It was not the loss of the book itself so much, it was the wasted hours of the brightest years of my life I mourned.

Gigi is dead! May the soil rest lightly on his bones. The evil he did me, unwittingly it may be, is writ in water; his kindness is deeply graven on a grateful memory.

Forgive me, gentle reader, if I have dwelt too long on what may, after all, seem but a trivial subject. I would fain think that this true relation of the story of a fire in the city of the Turks may not be without its modest interest.

In that fire perished the original of one of Mdme. Du Barry's passports—the only MS. of any importance, connected with the Great Revolution, I had brought with me. I had bought it in Paris on my way to Turkey. It gave her height, described her colouring, it bore her signature, and had been used by her when she went to England in search of her lost jewels. It was consumed within a few hundred yards of the house in which one of her bitterest enemies—who, like her, perished on the scaffold—first saw the light: the French poet, André Chénier.

Another curious feature in connection with the fire was the destruction of a small but perfectly authenticated and well-known drawing of St. Michael and the Dragon, by Andrea del Sarto, which had never left me in all my travels, since I was a lad. I carried it down to my temporary bedroom, but, in the hurry of escape, left it behind, and it was impossible to secure it; a few minutes after I left my room, it was lost for ever.

To give some idea of the extraordinary manner in which justice is conducted in Turkey, I may as well relate that seven weeks elapsed, before the police took the slightest notice of the affair, or examined such of the witnesses as remained in Constantinople—the majority, being tourists, had left immediately after their lucky escape. The universal opinion was that the old hotel—the first on the European system established in Constantinople, and formerly the De Franchi Palace—was purposely destroyed for a nefarious reason.

It was a well-built stone mansion of the seventeenth century, and contained some remarkably fine furniture.

About 1830 it was turned into an hotel by Misiri, an Italian courier, and butler to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who had married her ladyship's maid. Since the date of its opening, until its final destruction, it had entertained a series of Royal, diplomatic, artistic, and literary celebrities—the mere list of whose names would fill a page or so of this book.

I must not forget to mention that Madame Tholozan, the lady who saved my life by warning me of my danger, and who now unfortunately is dead herself, had escaped from no less than four world-famous fires. She was, I have heard, one of the three passengers saved from a vessel, coming from Bakou to Constantinople, cargoed with petroleum, which took fire in the Black Sea. She was in the Vienna theatre fire, and, contrived to get out uninjured. During the fire at the Opéra Comique she had a hair-breadth escape, and, finally, she was among the first people to leave the theatre at Nice, when it was burnt down to the ground some few years since. She had only arrived in Constantinople on the day preceding the fire in which I had such a costly and dismal experience. She escaped uninjured, but was, I fear, greatly shaken by the adventure, and she died a few months ago, to the regret of all who had the honour of knowing a very accomplished and interesting woman.

CHAPTER IX.

A NINETEENTH CENTURY GRAND VIZIR.

Down in Norfolk, in my grandfather's old house, there was a certain room hung with red damask, and known as "the best chamber." In it there stood a big oak bookcase, full of venerable tomes, the latest of them printed somewhere about the first decade of this century. Younger by some years than either of my brothers, I, who now survive them both, was a lonely child, who knew no greater delight in life than to steal into this room, full of rich crimson shadows, and pervaded by that air of mystery which ever lingers about a rarely entered chamber. To pull down a volume of the "Arabian Nights" and sit reading it in the ruddy twilight which filtered through the closely-drawn curtains, cast over me a charm the memory of which, even now, thrills me with delight. Perched on an old-fashioned arm-chair in the guest-chamber, I made my first acquaintance with the two dearest friends of my dreamy boyhood, Harun-al-Rashid and the Grand Vizir. Imagine then, my reader, if indeed you can, with what feelings of excitement, near akin to awe (even after so many long years of commonplace

existence), I received a communication from my friend Gigi, to the effect that a long-promised interview between myself and a genuine Grand Vizir had been arranged for the following afternoon. Visions of the big red room at home haunted me all that night, and I dreamt some hours away, wandering with the glorious old Khaliph, and Mesrour, through the streets and bazaars of Baghdad, or dallying in the marble halls, and enchanted palaces, those worthies were wont to frequent. I was childish enough to count the hours which should bring me face to face with that friend of my youth, the Grand Vizir!

It rained, on the longed-for morrow, as it can only rain in Constantinople—a tropical downpour. We started for the Sublime Porte at three o'clock, old Gigi and I. We rattled in our hired brougham over the crowded bridge, Gigi chattering all the way, turning the visit, by anticipation, into ridicule.

At last we reached the Sublime Porte. The numerous black stove-pipes, thrust through its orange-coloured stucco walls, are hideous enough to rob even a Louvre of any pretence to beauty, and set the seal of commonplaceness on the very ordinary building which bears this ill-applied though high-sounding title. Standing there, like a Brobdingnagian match-box, bored full of holes for windows, it looked inexpressibly dreary, in the downpour. The two little sentinels on each side of the door, mounted on stools to make them look taller, must have been drenched to their very bones. We made our entry by the Pashas' door, and beheld an Excellency — very stout and very gouty — being

hoisted into his carriage. When he had cleared the way for us to pass into the hall we found ourselves in a huge, low, whitewashed room, guarded by two more little Turkish sentinels, standing on two more round wooden stools or stands, just like a couple of toy soldiers. The floor of this hall was wet and shiny with the traffic of wet feet, and a few gas lamps, innocent of shades, were already flaring. At the end of this depressing apartment was a well-worn wooden staircase, before the lowest step of which two dirty attendants pounced upon our feet, and bereft us of our goloshes, which forthwith went to swell a prodigious pile of muddy footgear, stacked in a heap in a neighbouring corner, and presided over by a negro, who presented us with a check in return for our deposit. This ceremony was watched, with much appearance of interest, by some half-dozen seedy-looking individuals, who sat warming their hands round a brazier, and sipping the indispensable coffee, handed round on a common black lacquered tin tray, embellished with a half-obliterated view of the Eiffel Tower, by another slatternly-looking negro. Then we began to ascend the aforesaid shabby staircase, at the top of which two obsequious servants, in ill-fitting frock-coats turned green with age, ushered us, after the usual Oriental salutations, into a large empty room, with three French windows, draped with Brusa silk curtains, the trailing ends of which were half eaten away by mice. Presently one of the attendants returned, with a paraffine candle in a flat candlestick, which he set down on the floor in the middle of the room. There were no tables

or chairs, nothing but divans, covered with the same stuff as the curtains, even more tattered and mouse-nibbled. By-and-by Gigi, who had discovered some old Turkish gossip or other, of his own, installed himself on one of the divans, and the pair sat whispering with their heads together, whilst the reflection from the candle threw a weird exaggerated shadow of their profiles, and hooked noses, on the ceiling above.

I looked out of the window, having first of all scrubbed a clear spot to peep through—as far as I can judge, the majority of the windows in the Sublime Porte have not been cleaned since the building was first erected. This is what I saw through my clean pane: A wide courtyard, badly paved, full of pools of water; a hideous iron railing, and beyond that an ill-kept road; then a dead wall, and, above the wall, the dome of Sancta Sophia. To the left, I beheld a new mosque in process of erection; to the right, the tottering minaret of a mosque long since disused.

It was rapidly growing dark, and but few people were abroad. A couple of Turkish women passed—their veils and cloaks blowing about—struggling with their umbrellas, which were persistently turning inside out; then an urchin or so, going home from school; then a soldier; finally a carriage with a Pasha in it, escorted by a dozen or so men on horseback, drove off at full gallop towards the bridge, splashing furiously through the puddles, as it dashed past the two little drenched sentinels at the outer gate. Of Eastern pomp and glory I saw nothing—either within the Palace or without.

Presently, a well enough dressed gentleman appeared, and announced that His Highness the Grand Vizir would be happy to receive us. He led us down a dark corridor, full of mysterious people sitting on divans and whispering — everybody whispers in Turkey—and threw open the door of a very comfortable-looking room. A brand-new Axminster carpet covered the floor, and some rather handsome leather chairs were arranged round the apartment. There was a stove at white heat, and near it a very large American desk, and a capacious waste-paper basket. At this desk sat His Highness the Grand Vizir, a handsome gentleman of fifty or thereabouts, who wore a sort of German military uniform, with gold epaulettes, and an amazing number of Turkish decorations. He rose and greeted us, very affably, in the most approved modern fashion, begged us to be seated, and offered us cigarettes. Then he started talking *Sultan* in excellent French. According to His Highness, Abd-ul-Hamid was not so much the "Shadow" as the very "Light of God," shedding incessant and infinite benefits on all and sundry around him.

"My August Master thinks of nothing but the welfare of his subjects," said he, unctuously. "My August Master intends that Turkey shall stand at the head of civilisation. My August Master will make any sacrifice for the welfare of his people. My August Master's heart is big enough to absorb all the nations of the earth, Mohammedan and Christian alike. My August Master loves England. My

August Master cares only for peace. My August Master would not kill a flea, much less an Armenian," etc., etc.

The red room at home had by this time entirely faded from my memory. This Grand Vizir had naught in common with my old friend of Baghdad. Each time he said "My August Master," stringing his praises together as if he were reciting a litany, I said, deep down in my heart, unconsciously imitating Mr. Burchell, "Fudge! Fudge!"

At last we rose to take our leave. Said His Highness, without rising—that would have been too much condescension: "When you write about my August Master, you will speak nothing but the truth! (*Vous ne direz que la vérité.*)"

"Bien entendu, Altesse," said I, as I bade farewell to this very courteous and exceedingly handsome gentleman, who might have made a fair *Boulevardier*, but who was, to my thinking at least, a very indifferent representative of dear old Jaafar. "Je n'y manquerai pas. Je ne dirai que la vérité."

"Did you notice," said Gigi, as we left the room after endless salāms, which, as performed in our modern costume, bordered on the ridiculous, "those two creatures who stood so silent, so motionless, on either side of the door?"

"Yes."

"They were the mutes!"

So those two shabbily-dressed wretches, the drums of whose ears had been perforated, so that they should not hear, and whose tongues had been cut, so that

they should not report, but be simply deaf-mute watchers, are all that now remains of the state which, seventy years ago, still surrounded a Grand Vizir.

"I visited the Grand Vizir," thus runs a letter dated June, 1810, "and found him seated on a splendid divan, in a hall of state, in the Old Seraglio, of great size and loftiness, the walls of which were lined with the most beautiful Persian tiles I have ever seen, and the wooden ceiling rich with colour and gold. His Highness's robes were of satin, his caftan was of cloth of gold lined with ermine. There was a great crescent of diamonds in his towering turban, which clasped a tuft of flamingo feathers. There must have been seventy attendants, at least, surrounding him, each in a costume of exceeding splendour. I cannot tell you how imposing it all was. It was like a page out of Galland's 'Arabian Nights.'" *

* Unpublished letter from Constantinople, dated June 4th, 1810.

CHAPTER X.

KARAGHEUZ AND THE STAGE IN TURKEY.

In Ramazān, when the Mohammedans turn day into night and night into day, when, in the exquisite moonlight of the East, the enchantment of olden times reasserts itself, and envelopes Stambul with its magic romance; when the minarets and domes of the illuminated mosques stand out ghostly white, against a deep blue sky, gemmed with a myriad stars; when the quaint open shops in the narrow streets sparkle with coloured lamps, and groups of veiled women, guarded by eunuchs, each of whom bears a lantern fixed to a long pole, flit by mysteriously on their way to the mosque of Shah-zadé or of Ahmed* of the six minarets—Karagheuz, the Turkish Punch, performs before rapturous audiences, who crowd the cafés (almost exclusively patronised by Moslims) behind the beautiful Bāyezīdieh Mosque, the loveliest of all the three hundred and sixty Constantinople boasts.

Karagheuz is a far more important personage than most people would imagine; for, though he be but a

* The two mosques most frequented by women.

diminutive figure cut out of camel's hide and roughly painted, which plays its merry part behind a sheet, so that its comic outline and gorgeous colouring stand out against the white expanse, yet is he full of life and antics—a very epitome of Turkish wit and humour. In physical form he resembles our Punch, but in dress he more approaches Pantaloon. He is, I believe, a very ancient mannikin; I am persuaded that long before the days of Mohammed the Conqueror, Karagheuz, under some other name, was an old and familiar friend in the houses of the wealthy Byzantines, and enjoyed wide popularity in the slums of ancient Constantinople.

My introduction to him was made in Ramazān, 1894, in an outlandish little café, established in a ruined Byzantine building, immediately behind the great Bazaar, and close to the Harem or courtyard of the Mosque of Bāyezīd.

Shall I ever forget that night? When I shut my eyes, the whole scene comes back to me—the long, whitewashed room, with a curved roof, which had probably formed part of the apse of a church or shrine, the line of lighted horn lanterns, hung up against the wall, and casting a dull glimmer on the faces of the strange crowd seated in an improvised amphitheatre—for the performance invariably takes place in one corner of the chamber, across which a sheet is tightly stretched. In the front seats, on time-worn arm-chairs (which had seen better days, in some Ambassador's palace perhaps), were a few elderly Pashas, one or two in uniform, the rest gar[illegible]

hideous frock-coat of modern civilisation, with fezes on their heads. Their little bright-eyed children nestled close to them, watching proceedings in that earnest, yet half-listless way peculiar to Turkish urchins. A few old turbaned Turks sat gravely apart, smoking their chibouks. The background was filled up as usual, with a nondescript crowd of odds and ends from every corner of the earth, including several Cook's tourists, in prosaic tweed suits. In an obscure corner of the room, a group of Armenian and Greek women of the lowest class, muffled up in their thick black shawls, covering their heads and faces, sat apart, whispering eagerly one to another, and occasionally bursting into fits of ill-suppressed giggling, as Karagheuz, growing bolder and bolder with impunity and approbation, became more rampantly paganish than usual in his glaring impropriety.

During the performance tiny cups of aromatic coffee were constantly handed round by Circassian youths wearing the good old costume: baggy trousers and little coils of coloured linen, mere apology for turbans, heaped up on their shaven heads. From time to time, through the open door, I caught a glimpse of the exquisite Gothic alcove and porphyry columns of the beautiful Harem of the mosque, in which a kind of fair was in progress. Round the enormous cypress tree, which towers like a giant in the centre of the cloister, all sorts of dried fruits, oranges, dates, nuts, apples, sweetmeats, and rahat lakhoum were heaped up, under the guardianship of certain loud-voiced, bearded merchants, as picturesque

as ever Deschamps and Dévédeux painted. Beyond, the open portal of the mosque, flooded with the glare of a thousand lamps, revealed the interior of the Sanctuary, and the bent forms of its devout congregation, rising up and falling again, head to earth with rhythmic regularity, each time the name of Allah was pronounced by the Imām. No words can paint the singularity of that contrast. Looking one way, my eyes rested on the stretched field of white canvas, upon which Karagheuz was constantly violating every law of Allah and his Koran; and when they wearied of watching his impish infamy, a turn of the head discovered that other scene of peace and prayer.

Suddenly, the lights in the area of the improvised auditorium were extinguished, the sheet that was to serve for a stage shone opaquely transparent, and now the fun began in earnest. The orchestra—two drums, a flute, a viola, and a triangle—struck up those quavering sounds which enchant the Eastern ear, but which nearly drive the European listener mad. For a minute, or two, the transparency remained empty. Presently a funny little figure on a camel's back scurried across, speedily followed by a cat running after a mouse. The cat played with the mouse an unconscionable time, and finally swallowed it whole. At this the orchestra emitted the most appalling noises, a sort of quivering shriek, intermingled with a rumbling rattle—possibly intended to illustrate the agonies of the luckless mouse in the torture-chamber of the cat's stomach; then, with a deafening tattoo on the quaint-shaped drum, it gradually settled into

silence. Pussy's repast was evidently over. The incident of the cat and the mouse had so delighted the audience that a little wave of admiring whispers rippled through the chamber, to be presently silenced, as the figures of two ladies were projected upon the screen. One was dressed in European and the other in Turkish fashion. They were apparently in earnest conversation, when, suddenly, they were joined by a Turkish "masher" in "Stambuline" or frock-coat, with a straight collar, lavender trousers, patent leather boots, etc., *au grand complet*. On his head he wore a fez. A prodigious moustache, curling up under his nose, added a rakishness that was irresistibly funny to his appearance. Presently the masher slipped a piece of paper into Madame's hand, after which he made obvious overtures to elope with the Hanum. For a few minutes everything seemed rose-coloured; but alas! Karagheuz was at hand, keen to make mischief—bringing with him, on this his first appearance, the outraged husband of the lady. Then there was much animation upon the sheet. The husband and the lover fought right valiantly, the husband, I am sorry to say, continually getting the worst of it, much to the delight of the public. His fez flew off, his frock-coat was torn, and, reduced at last to a pitiable plight, he was obliged to beat an ignominious retreat. Once more the Turkish lady, she of Europe, and the masher were grouped together, and judging from the manner in which their heads met and the earnest whispered consultation in which they apparently engaged, they were evidently plotting some

fresh outrage against the offended husband. Nemesis, however, was at hand, again in the shape of Karagheuz, who shortly returned, in company, this time, of his *alter ego*, Hadji-aïvat, of whom anon. Things now became very mixed indeed, for both these iniquitous little gentlemen having cast a longing glance upon the ladies' charms, determined forthwith to rid themselves of the inconvenient masher. When least that luckless youth expected it, they pounced upon him and literally pulled him in two. Then followed a scene with the fair ladies which I may not describe—not even in Latin!

Karagheuz is about eight inches high, and is always shown in profile. He is the best caricature imaginable of a fussy old Turk, with a parrot-like nose, and a beady, glittering eye, screened by a thick projecting eyebrow. This eye, as is often the case in certain Byzantine mosaics, notwithstanding that the figure is in profile, is shown full-faced, and surrounded by a thick black line, which makes the china white of the ball uncannily vivid, and thus gives the diminutive countenance an indescribably devilish expression. His cone-shaped poll is surmounted by a huge turban, which on the slightest provocation is removed by a wire, to display his cocoa-nut of a head, an exhibition always greeted with shouts of laughter. He wears a coloured waistcoat, a short jacket, and a pair of baggy trousers, with striped stockings, exactly like those of our pantaloon. His legs and arms are flexible, and are moved by skilfully concealed wires, and his gestures are clumsy but vigorous enough. Karagheuz is invariably

owned and worked by an Armenian; the Turks are not even equal to reciting their own jokes or pulling the wires of their own marionettes. He is not utterly alone in the world, for, as I have already mentioned, he has his friend Hadji-aïvat by way of confidant. This little gentleman is twin brother to Harlequin. More alert in his movements than Karagheuz, he not unfrequently executes the abominations he suggests for the delectation of his master and crony.

An illustration of this occurred early in the play I am endeavouring to describe. When Karagheuz and Hadji-aïvat, between them, had pulled the venturesome masher to pieces, the exertion consequent on this peculiar method of execution apparently proved too much for Karagheuz, who fell panting into a sitting position, in an acute angle of the sheet. Not so Hadji-aïvat, for, when the French Ambassador came upon the scene (whether by chance or design I never knew) he conducted himself abominably. On beholding His Excellency he fell prostrate at his feet, while Karagheuz limply rose and followed suit. The attitude of the Ambassador was exceedingly majestic, as, addressing himself to one of his secretaries, who now slid on to the canvas, he lifted his stick menacingly. At once, the two ladies rushed forward, apparently to beseech his protection. The Ambassador received them affably enough and offered each an arm, doubtless with the object of escorting them to the Embassy. On this Hadji-aïvat, who had got behind His Excellency, suddenly jumped upon his back. In an instant his gold-laced coat was in tatters, his

cocked hat cast to the winds, and the representative of the *Grande République* now appeared a very poor, thin, wretched individual indeed, stricken with rheumatism and seemingly afflicted with the gout. Howling with pain he rushed off, followed by his fair friends, whilst the orchestra struck a few chords, vaguely recalling the Marseillaise. Karagheuz, evidently afraid of the consequences, promptly bolted, leaving Hadji-aïvat triumphant master of the field. What became of the ladies is more than I can say. They disappeared from the stage altogether, and were presently replaced by two negresses.

Next we saw a caravan bound for Mecca, mounted on camels, even on elephants, the little beasts being by no means badly constructed. The elephants caused intense merriment, for with their long trunks they helped to undress a goodly number of people, and otherwise facilitated the pranks of Karagheuz and Hadji-aïvat, to whom the undressing of ladies and gentlemen in public apparently offers peculiar attractions.

All this time the Armenian behind the screen recited, in a singsong voice, a dialogue in Turkish, full of preposterous *double-entendres* and questionable "chestnuts." Occasionally, to the accompaniment of the little orchestra, he sang a few verses in those quivering nasal tones which Orientals admire, as much as we Europeans the roulades of a Patti. Alas! I must not translate the verses for your benefit—if I did, this page would surely never be published ; nor dare I whisper into your ear even a single specimen of the

bon-mots which excited such Homeric laughter in the audience of the little café behind the Bāyezīdieh ; nor yet may I enter into further particulars of the exploits of Karagheuz, nor describe in detail how he and his friend Hadji-aïvat divested themselves of their last scrap of reticence, and, like a pair of little drunken Satyrs, careered madly up and down the key-board of equivocal conduct, thereby provoking such roars of delight that the braided pigtails of the three little grand-daughters of a certain Pasha (who sat in an arm-chair in the front row, and who nearly had a fit himself), literally vibrated with the intensity of their excitement, and their childish merriment rang through the building, re-echoed by the significant chuckles of the group of mysterious Christian women huddled together in the dark corner.

So, on and on, went Karagheuz and his friend, leaving no iniquity untried, until, in an evil moment for himself, the old sinner tumbled, like Humpty-Dumpty, off a high wall, and could not be picked up again. Then they buried him, Turkish fashion, hurrying him to his grave as fast as they could; but Karagheuz, who is immortal, presently pushed up the lid of his coffin, and sat upon it, roaring with laughter, to the intense amusement of the public, who applauded till their hands ached, and bestowed liberal doles of small coin on the two handsome lads who came round with a pewter platter to collect their offerings. The light behind the screen disappeared as suddenly as it had shone out, and the outrageous little orchestra played a *crescendo* finale, winding up

with a prolonged shriek intended to inform us, so I conceive, that Satan had ended by securing the little Turkish Don Juan and his Leporello for all eternity.

We drank a parting cup of coffee, and the Armenian manager came from behind his screen to be introduced to the strangers, and receive the compliments of the more distinguished among the audience. Then the company poured out into the street, and joined the crowd in the courtyard of the beautiful mosque, not a few of them, I noticed, entering the building for evening prayer. I must confess that the impression produced by this performance, and several others which I subsequently attended, was to me intensely interesting. The broad humour of the jokes gave me a key to Asiatic domestic life, which otherwise I should never have possessed. Sometimes, in Ramazān, Karagheuz and his camel-hide troupe transport themselves into the interiors of the Hareems of the wealthy, much to the delight of the Hanums, to whom his evil conduct seems the most natural and delightful thing in the world. Occasionally Karagheuz pays a visit to the Yildiz Kiosk, where he is very careful not to say or do anything offensive to God's Shadow. Perhaps, after all, he is not so old as I was disposed to think him. A learned authority assures me that he derives his name from a favourite fool, who flourished at the Court of Salādin —a very respectable pedigree, surely, for a mannikin made of camel's hide. I made my first acquaintance with him, as I have said, in a café. There he was

scandalously improper, if you like, but you could not call him immoral, since he made no pretence to the possession of any moral code whatever. I took my leave of him in an ambassadorial drawing-room, in the corner of which, with tongue slit, and wings clipped, by order of the censor, he was posturing before an admiring circle of Ambassadresses. Under this restraint, the little wretch appeared to me more infamous than ever, for he had added hypocrisy to his other vices. Moreover, he had lost his humour, and, with that, his *raison d'être.* He had ceased to be an interesting survival, had become a mere drawing-room curiosity, and had grown downright stupid in the process. Their Excellencies, however, evidently considered him a very funny little dog indeed, and, I fear me, they even rather regretted his reticence. He certainly gave them no occasion whatever to spread their dainty fans.

But Karagheuz is not the only theatrical performance popular in Ramazān. A little further down the street in which I had visited the shrine of that ill-conducted little monster, I discovered, one night, a large wooden booth knocked up in fair imitation of a European theatre. Within it I found the usual Turkish orchestra, dressed in the shabbiest European garb. The musicians banged and twanged for a good half-hour on their quaint instruments, whilst the theatre filled up, chiefly with Armenians and Greeks. In the principal boxes—there were six of them—I noticed several Pashas and their children. The curtain rose upon a Turkish version of *La Dame*

aux Camélias, Marguerite Gautier being played by an Armenian lady, not at all a bad actress, but almost the size of the famous fat woman at Olympia. It was a very funny performance. The Armand Duval was so diminutive, that when he had to kiss his Marguerite, he was forced to stretch on tip-toe. The audience, however, took everything very seriously, and applauded rapturously each time the curtain fell.

The Armenian actress must have seen Sarah Bernhardt's performance of Marguerite Gautier, for she rendered her saccharine accents perfectly, in the soft Turkish language. I was assured she had been, some years before, a remarkable artist, popular from Stambul to Trebizond and Van. In an after-piece by Kelmi, the only Turkish dramatist of note, she was admirable, but this time she wore the national costume, and seemed more at her ease.

Now, Hareem life does not lend itself readily to dramatic treatment. Like the conventual existence, it is too monotonous (unless, indeed, its even tenour be interrupted by some unexpected or tragic event) to be of much interest, from the theatrical point of view—at all events, to spectators who are familiar with its reality.

The complete separation of the sexes is, of course, a stumbling-block to the Mohammedan dramatist, writing for a Mohammedan audience, which would not pardon any improbability, ignorance of detail, or even poetic licence. Moreover, Hareem life is sacred, and to bring it upon the stage would be an unpardonable breach of etiquette, amounting to a profanation. Under these circumstances, it is not wonderful that the Turks

should delight in the antics and coarse jests of their beloved Karagheuz, who is, as it were, one of themselves, initiated into the secrets of their lives, and specially fitted therefore to promote their hilarity. Non-Mohammedan Turkish subjects and foreigners may understand and enjoy a play by Sardou, which represents their view of life; but to the untravelled Mohammedan it is absolutely unintelligible.' I noticed that most of the Turks who attended the performance of *La Dame aux Camélias* invariably laughed in the wrong place. They roared, for instance, at the violent love-making of Armand Duval, which naturally appeared both ludicrous and improbable to them, for love-making, in our sense, is utterly unknown to a people who for centuries past have been in the habit of buying their wives in the public market-place *sans peines d'amour.*

In bygone times, not so very long ago, indeed, on certain State occasions—as, for instance, when the Sultan married off one of his daughters, or if the Khedive or some native or foreign potentate came on a visit—open-air theatrical representations on a prodigious scale were included in the entertainments provided by the Grand Signor for his guests. They consisted of a sort of ballet, not unlike those now so popular at Earl's Court, in which hundreds of performers took part. An old English gentleman, living in Constantinople when I was there, distinctly remembered the festivities on the occasion of the marriage of Princess Mihrimāh, the favourite daughter of Mahmūd II., with Achmet Pasha. On the slope of a hill, on the ground now occupied by the gardens of Yildiz

Kiosk, a sort of natural stage was formed by the rising sward, the trees on each side being cut back so as to give space for an immense company of actors. The spectators, seated in an improvised amphitheatre, crowded the opposite hill from foot to crest. Stands were erected on the right-hand and the left for the Sultan and his Court, while the ladies of the Imperial Hareem sat, concealed from view, in a monster bird-cage, through the gilded lattice of which they could behold the spectacle. An orchestra, consisting of over one hundred musicians, performed upon all manner of Oriental instruments of music—an appalling din, which never ceased for a single moment. The performance commenced with a procession, representing the trades and crafts of Turkey, and the nationalities which compose that most heterogeneous of Empires, all in their respective costumes. When this interesting *cortège* had passed before the Sultan, and paid him homage, hundreds of young boys, beautifully dressed as girls, danced a sort of ballet, which was interrupted by the entrance of a man leading four Jews in a leash, who ran about on all-fours, and barked like dogs. This degradation of the detested race provoked tremendous laughter. Then came tumblers and acrobats of all kinds, and the entertainment was brought to a brilliant close by a display of fireworks, during which all the personages who had already appeared in the pageant, reentered, dancing, and running about wildly with flaming torches in their hands. This and kindred spectacles were performed during eight consecutive days, and cost ten thousand pounds.

Early in the last century the Genoese opened a theatre in Galata, where opera, tragedy, and comedy were performed in the winter season—generally in Italian, occasionally in French, and even in Greek. The players usually came either from Venice or Genoa, and arrived viâ Smyrna, where they halted to act for three or four nights before the large Italian colony. Goldoni, in his admirable comedy, *Un Impresario in Smirna*, has given us an amusing picture of the sort of life led by a travelling company of players in the Levant.

In 1827 the Galata Theatre was removed to Pera, and Italian opera has been performed there without intermission, every winter, on a respectable scale, and occasionally with first-class artists. Sometimes the performance has been honoured by the presence of the Sultan and his Court. Abd-ul-Aziz was extremely fond of the opera, and used to attend the Verdi Theatre as often as twice a week. "Stars" were in those days frequently engaged for the winter season. Ristori, Salvini, Rossi, and Bernhardt, and others of equal magnitude, have and do play even yet on the Pera stage, although the accommodation of the theatre is miserable in the extreme. At one time the opera season in the Turkish capital was the great event in the social life of the place. The singers were not only well paid, but made much of, and often received splendid presents from the Sultan and the principal Pashas. It is otherwise nowadays. The present Sultan has never set foot in Pera since his accession to the throne, although he occasionally follows the example of our gracious Sovereign, and

"commands" a private performance of any remarkably successful play or opera, at Yildiz Kiosk. He hates tragedy in any case, and fully enjoys opera bouffe. Some years ago, the Italian Ambassador induced him to "command" Salvini to recite one or two of his great tragic scenes in his presence. His Majesty was so dreadfully frightened that he got up in the middle of the performance, and hastily left the theatre. He absolutely refused to see Sarah Bernhardt, saying he did not care to witness the acting of a woman who mimicked death to such perfection.

As the Sultan will not leave Yildiz to go to the theatre, he has built himself a commodious little house attached to his Palace, where, when he pleases, he can, like the late King of Bavaria, attend a dramatic performance in solitary state, or, if he so condescend, in the company of the fifteen hundred ladies of his Hareem. There is a whole troupe of actors attached to this theatre, which is managed by an Italian. Under Sultan Abd-ul-Medjid, the office of Impresario and Ballet-Master to the Sultan was held by a brother of Donizetti, who used to coach the ladies of the Hareem in the graces of Italian dancing. The young ladies used to attend their lessons in full skirts, and the indispensable fleshings, but their faces were invariably veiled. Donizetti, who was a very funny old Italian gentleman, was never allowed to approach them nearer than a certain distance, indicated by a thick cord stretched across the room. Two stalwart eunuchs mounted guard, and were deputed to see the sprightly little dancing-master kept his eyes to himself, and made no attempt

to ogle the fair denizens of the halls of "eternal bliss." One day, however, he was so engrossed in his endeavours to teach a fair Odalisque how to lift her leg on a level with her nose, that he broke through the magic circle. The eunuchs were upon him in an instant, and were just about to administer sound chastisement, when the good-natured Pādishāh appeared upon the scene, and instantly ordered his release.

Four or five years ago, the Verdi Theatre was burnt down, and has never been rebuilt. The only place of public entertainment now open, which is attended by respectable people, is the Municipal Theatre in the Petits Champs, a sort of music-hall, about the size of our Steinway Hall. The open-air summer theatre, attached to the Public Gardens, has a large stage, but as the price asked for admission is very trifling, the singers are of inferior calibre. You can hear them screaming at the top of their voices for half a mile round. Nothing funnier can be imagined than the expression of the lower order of Turks, who flatten their noses against the railings to catch a glimpse of the performance. The Giaours, they seem to say, *must* be mad, if they enjoy this sort of howling.

There are a number of fifth-rate music-halls and *cafés chantants* in Pera, of which the Concordia is by far the best, but even there, as a rule, the singers and variety people are a poor lot. The said Concordia is a fair-sized and well-constructed house, and I have seen one or two interesting performances there. I remember, for instance, a company of Hebrew players from Pesth, who performed Lessing's *Nathan the*

Wise and Mosenthal's *Deborah*, very decently. Here, also, I witnessed a primitive, and sadly mutilated, representation of the *Antigone*. I had hitherto known the Hellenic language as pronounced at Oxford and Cambridge, and had thought it particularly ugly. It was otherwise when I heard the majestic lines of Sophocles declaimed by educated Greek actors. Even Italian must yield to this astonishing language. No words can do justice to its power and grandeur when properly pronounced—no music, I am sure, can be more soothing.

It would scarcely be fair to write of the theatre and stage in Turkey without mentioning the remarkable translations into the Turkish language of some of the best of Molière's, Racine's, Corneille's, and Shakespeare's plays by His Excellency Ahmed Vefyk Pasha, formerly Ambassador to Paris, and for some time Governor of Anatolia. During his residence at Brusa he worked, with extraordinary activity and zeal, for the welfare of the singularly mixed population over which he was called to rule. Independently of his restoration of the beautiful Yechili Mosque, and other historical buildings, he constructed a little theatre, still in existence (a very primitive one if you like, but still a comfortable hall with a fair-sized stage), upon which his admirable translations—for such they are esteemed by Turkish scholars—of *Le Médecin malgré Lui*, *Le Dépit Amoureux*, *Le Mariage Forcé*, *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, *Don Juan*, *Henri III.*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and of many other French, German, and English dramas have been frequently acted, as well as more recent translations of

the comedies of Feuillet and Sardou. The actors and actresses are invariably Armenians, who, however, perform in Turkish. Another curious fact in this connection is that the players are more frequently than not dressed in Turkish costume. The Censorship—always childish, not to say imbecile—has of late years been very active with regard to the native and foreign stage. For instance, when M. Mounet Sully announced his intention of paying Pera a visit, he was soon informed that such plays as *Hamlet*, *Œdipe Roi*, and *Ruy Blas*, could not be performed in the capital of Abd-ul-Hamid. M. Le Febvre, in the same way, was ordered to countermand an announced performance of *Le Tartuffe* (at one time, by the way, very popular in its Turkish version), because certain lines in it might be interpreted as having a political significance, unfavourable to the reigning Sovereign. The Turkish name of this play may be freely translated as *Filthy Hamid*. It was adapted and translated in the reign of Abd-ul-Aziz, when nobody thought his younger nephew, Abd-ul-Hamid Effendi, would ever ascend the throne.

At Christmas time in 1894, down in Galata, in a certain queer, out-of-the-way, rambling Hann, a highly respectable, but somewhat venerable, troupe of marionettes was installed by its manager, for the purpose of performing a series of sacred dramas. So eager was I and one of my friends to witness one of these representations, that we narrowly escaped breaking our necks on our way down Step Street, which was one sheet of ice, and as slippery as a glacier. We found the little theatre packed with a motley

audience of the lowest class of Armenians, Greeks, and Italians, at least half the men being sailors. A petroleum lamp or two lit up the company, and the stage. Every kind of type was to be seen. Stalwart bronzed sailors from the Ægean, oily-looking Russians who had come down the Black Sea, on their way to Palestine, whither they were going, escorted by some wild-looking priests, on pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. An English sailor or two, and some rollicking young Neapolitans, came very near being ejected for chattering out of place. Intermingled with these worthies were a number of Jewish, Greek, and Armenian women, of the most degraded class, painted and attired like so many Jezebels, their numerous pigtails of jet-black hair half concealed under the vivid coloured handkerchiefs bound round their heads.

Many a classical name was bandied about. Artemisia greeted Ulysses and Persephone, and Antigone sat next us and munched walnuts all through the performance. Presently a death-like silence fell upon the hitherto boisterous assembly. A barrel organ struck up the inevitable Intermezzo from the *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and the curtain rose on "the most sacred and tragical drama of the life, death, and martyrdom of the blessed Thekla." I never in all my life saw anything to come up to the ugliness of the marionettes.

The last scene was a triumph. It represented the interior of the Colosseum, densely crowded with the queerest looking puppets, about two feet high, dressed as ancient Romans. Cæsar was there, a very large-headed, pale-faced puppet with a wry neck, who, when he got up to give an order, absolutely refused to sit

down again until one of the "readers" seized him from behind and bent him double, so that his left leg stuck up above his head, discovering his knees bandaged up in old play-bills. He would, in all probability, have remained in this unbecoming attitude until the end, had not some one in the audience perceived the difficulty and attracted managerial attention thereto; whereupon His Imperial Majesty was hoisted out of his throne by means of a wire fixed in the exact centre of his skull, put in order, and subsequently returned to his place. Santa Thekla, Virgin and Martyr, was represented by a young-looking doll of prepossessing appearance, and very long flaxen hair, who, oddly enough, wore a fashionable pink silk hat with voluminous feathers, and a black velvet mantle. To see her defy the Emperor; to behold her tricks and her manners when she bade adieu to her weeping attendants; to witness her jerks and contortions when she pronounced a judgment on her murderers; and above all, to note with what surprising fortitude she took off her bonnet and shawl and placed her doll-head upon the block to receive the fatal blow, were, each and all, things well worthy of a visit to the old Hann. No sooner was the head off Santa Thekla's body than a supernatural vengeance fell upon the assembled dolls in the Colosseum. Red and blue fire lighted up the dread arena, producing the most disastrous effect upon Cæsar, who not only lost all control over his legs, but was in imminent danger of parting with them altogether, and his arms too, in his desperate efforts to effect an escape, which, however, was prevented by a thunderbolt which laid him prostrate for the night. Then

the red fire began to diminish, and, as it burnt down, a figure of the Virgin Martyr, with pink hat and plumes, and black velvet jacket, all complete, was discovered floating through the air to the tune of "God save the Queen." Down came the curtain amidst a storm of applause, and cries of *fuori*, which brought Cæsar (his legs in perfect order) and Santa Thekla before the curtain, three several times, to acknowledge the plaudits of their enthusiastic admirers.

The rough-and-tumble audience received this performance with a degree of genuine sympathy which baffles belief. They sobbed when Thekla was beheaded, and would have torn Cæsar to fragments on the slightest provocation. I do not believe one of those so-called Christians could have given you a direct answer as to who Jesus Christ was, or had ever learnt the first lines of the Catechism. But to them, Christianity is not a religion only, it is a nationality. There was scarcely a man or a woman in that crowded room but could count half a score of martyrs in his or her own family—men and women who had died for Christ, fearlessly, ungrudgingly—and yet whose notions concerning Him and His work were, I dare say, strangely nebulous. I feel sure half the wild-looking audience would have cheerfully died the most horrible of deaths rather than have denied their Faith, even such as it is. Thus Thekla and the story of her martyrdom were a terrible reality to these dwellers in a land where religious massacres are still a cruel, and a by no means uncommon fact.

END OF VOL. I.

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